

THE HILLS OF GOD

MILES HANSON



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THE HILLS OF GOD



Miles Hanson.

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BY

MILES HANSON

Author of *The Power Behind, Out of
Old Paths, etc.*



PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES

THE BEACON PRESS, INC.

25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

NEW YORK

CHICAGO

SAN FRANCISCO

2219237

BX 9843
.H43 H5

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NOV 17 '23

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TO DR. ARCHIBALD DUFF

MY HELPER AND FRIEND IN COLLEGE
AND THROUGH ALL SUBSEQUENT YEARS

PREFACE

The following sermons, preached in the First Church in Roxbury during the winter of 1922 and 1923, are published at the desire of the Roxbury Women's Alliance, who would not listen to my protests against such a procedure.

Preached from notes, they owe their existence in permanent form to the skill and constancy of Miss Jeannette Soule to whom our thanks and acknowledgments of service and faithfulness cannot be overstressed.

When Miss Soule's copies reached me to revise for printing, a problem presented itself; should the sermons be printed practically as delivered—short curt sentences with no literary beauties, or should I carefully remould and reshape more in accordance with literary demands? If I took the latter course the sermons would read better, if I took the former they would be more myself, and fit in better with the memories abiding with the speaker and listener.

Readers of a former volume of sermons have often written me and said, "As we read we could hear and see you." I have left the sermons as delivered so that my friends may perchance see and hear me as they read.

I hope that the sermons will assist some who are trying to solve a few of the problems of life.

MILES HANSON.

SALUTATION

Greetings from the First Church in Roxbury, founded in 1632. John Eliot, the spiritually-minded Apostle to the Indians, was our first Teacher, and continued his fruitful labors for fifty-eight years. His devout and worthy successor preached these sermons in the First Church. We heard them. We know the reader will be deeply impressed.

FRANK W. MENDUM
Chairman of the Standing Committee.

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THE GREAT OFFENSIVE

After a period of silent prayer we will join together in prayer.

We thank Thee, Father, for the times when we have met with Thee within these walls. We thank Thee for the times when we have touched the hem of the Divine garment and felt again made whole. And we pray that to-day the experiences that we have known in the past may be repeated; no, may be surpassed. May we as never before experience Thy nearness; may we as never before experience Thy blessing. Help us to seek Thee with all our heart and soul and mind. Forgetting everything else, may we seek the highest things, the highest life, and put aside all that is lower. May we truly be in the Holy of Holies, and thus be helped to lead a holy life. And so may we go forth holy in purpose, pure in heart, and consecrated to help. Amen.

In the Gospel according to St. Mark, chapter viii, and verse 31, we find these words: "The Son of man must suffer many things, . . . and be killed, and the third day rise again." "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be killed, and the third day rise again."

That necessity "must" recurs frequently throughout the life of Jesus. It is very apparent that he felt, all the way through, that he was compelled to suffer and at last to die. Why? That question has been asked ever since. Why? And the general answer that has been given has, of course, been a theological one. The answer has been

made to fit in with a theory or a philosophy of life. I have never yet been satisfied with any theological theory. There is always something behind it to my mind, that holds me back from giving full allegiance. But I have been reading lately a book by the Chaplain of Mansfield College, Oxford—a Congregational training college, and he has given me a rather new suggestion in answer to that question, Why must Jesus suffer? Why? And I want in my own words to give very largely his answer.

I find that it is always helpful to see Jesus just as a man, to put ourselves, as it were, in his place.

We have a young man living in a little village, working hard at manual labor, for we almost know that his father died early and that his mother was left with a family of little folks, and the eldest boy had to work—hard—to keep the house together. He made just the simple instruments that an agriculturist would require. And we can see him, day by day, in that very simple shop working and toiling probably hard, a little different from most of the young men by being quieter, by loving to be alone, and I feel pretty sure that every evening he set out for a long walk over the hills alone. He was, I am sure, very kindly and liked by the folks in the village, but still a little bit marvelled at from his life of quietude and of thoughtfulness. I can imagine he said very little, but thought a good deal.

By and by, when he was about twenty-seven or eight, he felt impelled to go out and teach. There was another young man about his age preaching, and the two became associated—John the Baptist. And John made a strange

prophecy, that this Jesus, this village young man, was the promised Messiah. Everything was ready for a revolution, just as ready as it was in Russia when the Czar was put on one side. Everything was ready. John appears, a violent, earnest, telling preacher. Jesus appears. And John says, "This is the man to lead."

The two men—about the same age—evidently taught about the same way, I mean the same truths. They said, "Beware of evil that you have done, and turn around and live in the right spirit." That, apparently, was the same foundation for both men—Repent! Repent! John was the violent preacher of the two, a typical—typical, I was going to say, Evangelistic preacher. Jesus, I expect, taught very much more quietly. John, with his ardor and enthusiasm and bravery, very soon got into difficulty. Herod was living a wrong life, and John attacked him. You know the end. John was put into prison. What should Jesus do? I can imagine the whole of the would-be revolutionists asking that question. "What is Jesus going to do now? His companion is thrown into prison, what is he going to do about it? Why should he not do the favorite thing of the world, storm the Bastille, and set John free?" That was the way of a brave man, surely. All he had to do was to call together his forces and go and free John, and to say that Herod, the King, was not to put John to death. Or, perhaps, why not something like what those Cornish men did? Perhaps you remember, in your history. James the Second ordered the Bishops to read the "Declaration of Indulgence," the Bishops refused, and James put seven of them in prison. Amongst

the seven was the Bishop of Bristol—by the name of Trelawney. The Cornish men rose at once in defence of their Bishop, and they composed this song:

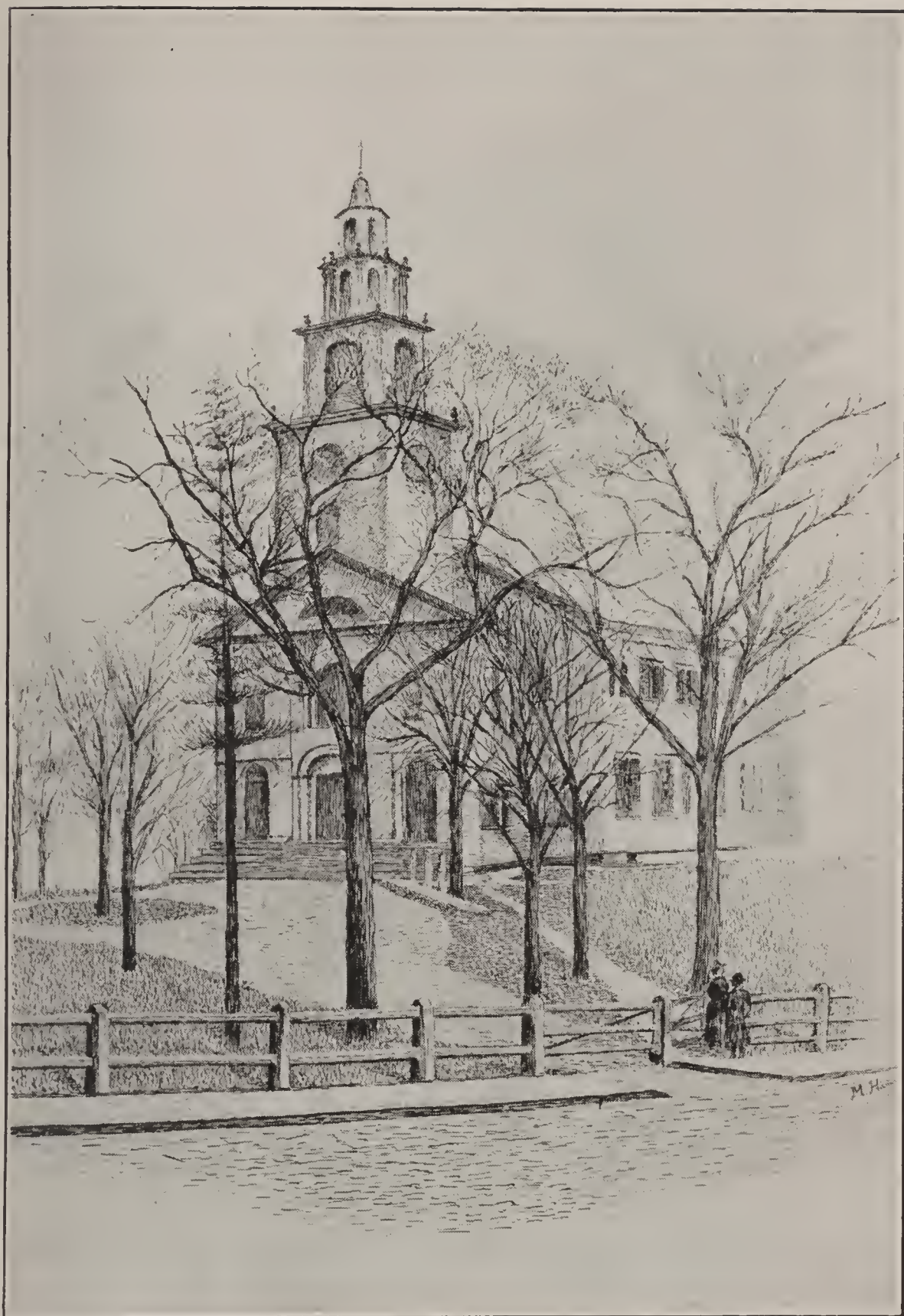
“And shall Trelawney die, and shall
Trelawney die?
Then fifty thousand Cornish men will
know the reason why.”

Why should not Jesus do just the same?

Shall John die?
Then fifty thousand Galilæans
Will know the reason why.

That is what they expected. And Jesus went into the country, and talked to the little groups about the beauty of the lilies, and lost coins. “Why should he do it?” The revolutionists didn’t want to hear about a lost coin that an ordinary woman lost, they didn’t want a homily on lilies. There was something more serious on the docket than that. And yet Jesus spent two years talking to little groups. We know there was a reason for it. Jesus, that quiet young man, believed absolutely that the way of life was the way of Love. He had no faith in revolution, he had no faith in violence. His Kingdom was not a kingdom of this world, else his many soldiers—the angels of God—would fight. His Kingdom was different. He wanted to win men by Love. And not one in Palestine understood it. They were absolutely impatient.

The two years passed, and then he went up to Jeru-



Drawing by Miles Hanson

FIRST CHURCH IN ROXBURY

salem. And those who expected great things said to themselves, "Now, now, something is going to happen. Now we shall see the Messiah treading down his enemies under his feet." He stopped at Jericho and the first thing he did was to talk to a taxgatherer, and to make the astounding statement that a grafter for the City of Rome was a son of Abraham, the worst—tactically—movement that he could have made. It was a queer beginning, to talk about a taxgatherer being a son of Abraham. "John would never have talked like that," I can imagine some saying.

Then the next thing he did was to talk to a fallen woman, and to say, "This thing that she has done shall be told all over the world." What nonsense! What nonsense! When a kingdom was to be won, to talk about a coin, or a fallen woman.

Then he went on toward Jerusalem, and at last he did something that was reasonable. All the old prophecies had told about the King riding into Jerusalem on an ass, and now the scene is staged just to fit the old prophecies, and he rides into Jerusalem just as the old prophets had said. Now he is doing something sensible. And then, directly, he empties the Temple, scourges those who are in the Temple. Again, a very wise thing to do. Now we are on the beginning of great deeds! And he stands at the gate of the Temple and says, "Do you see that old woman? Her penny is greater than anything that is given." A poor widow! A queer-thing to say. They didn't want to hear about widows' pennies.

And worse than that. He goes out of the city, and

looks at the stars at night, and sits under the trees dreaming. I can imagine that he lost heart. He had been trying two years and a half to show that the way of life was the way of quiet Love. Nobody understood him. And I can imagine him—how he had almost made up his mind to go away.

Just at that moment some Greeks came by and asked him to come and teach them. What a splendid opportunity! Palestine would not listen to him, perhaps the Greek-speaking people would. Why should he not go away? And then I think there came into that mind something like this: "I have been trying all my life to teach folk that the way to win is to love. I will make one more effort. It will cost me my life, I know it, but I will make one more effort. I will go back into the Capital and when they treat me the worst I will show them I love them the most. I will give them a supreme example of overwhelming Love. I will make the last mortal effort to see if my ways shall not win. I will make one more Great Offensive, the greatest of my life. I will face the crowd. I will face all who are disappointed in me, and I will show them again that the one way to win is to love."

And you know what happened. It did cost him his life. And when he was dying, he said, "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing." And he passed out, a martyr to Love, a martyr to quiet service. And he passed out a dead failure, it seemed—not one man who understood him, not a single one who stayed true to the end. He set out to win the world

to a loving service, and on Good Friday it seemed as if he had failed.

Then something happened. Something happened, but nobody knows what. Neither the orthodox nor the heterodox students can tell us what happened actually. But something happened. And in three days the disciples pulled themselves together, and Christianity, as it were, began.

Unfortunately, friends, unfortunately, even Christianity as a Romanized faith, has never quite grasped the meaning of Jesus. The Messiah, who was preached by the early Church, was not the Jesus who lived in Galilee. And when I hear men talking, to-day, about a Second Coming, when the great Leader shall deluge the world with blood, I cannot help but think we haven't learned what Jesus meant to teach. Sometimes, even, Jesus seemed to forget it, but generally he was true to himself. The ways of the Spirit are not the ways of spilling blood. They are the ways of giving blood. The ways of the Spirit are not the noisy ways of a worldly triumph. They are the ways of lowly, unnoticed, loving service.

Of course, with the Easter, and the renewal of a faith in the Messiah, there came the great world-wide teaching that we call the teaching of Jesus. The ways of Love failed, apparently. But they won wonderfully. Not one of the admirers of Jesus stands near him. No deeds of the realm of the West come near those of Jesus, and, to-day, the finest jewels in his crown are those jewels of gentle service, of loving helpfulness, and of the quiet winning of souls to himself.

Easter tells me that finally Love wins. Apparently it loses. Finally it wins. I wonder if we believe that. I don't think we do.

I cannot help but think if Jesus, or a teacher like him—I don't like to say if he came back, but, say, a teacher like him: supposing we had a teacher like him, to-day, who taught just what he taught, who did just what he did, do you think we should follow him? I doubt if one in a thousand would follow him. No. I doubt if one in a million would believe him wise. It seems so impossible. The ways of force seem the right ways to gain one's end, and the way of quiet Love and even unobtrusive ways seem so utterly useless.

I have felt it scores of times. You have. Why don't we do something? Why didn't Jesus do something? Because he believed that the way of life was the way of the Spirit. Friends, I cannot help but feel that his way is true. The way to win is at least to love, the way to gain the whole world is to serve. "If any man," said Jesus, "would be my disciple, let him take up his cross," and Peter, the best man of the whole of them, said, "That is not right." You remember he rebuked Jesus, and the answer of Jesus was, "Thou savorest—thou understandest—not the things of the Spirit, thou knowest the ways of men."

Friends, I call you to the ways of the Spirit. I want to see, and you want to see, the world made beautiful. I want to see, as you want to see, evil lessened, lawbreaking decreased, and the forces of darkness scattered.

We all want that. There is one way to do it effectually, and only one way—the effectual way is the way of the Spirit. I call you to take that way. Will you? Will you?

Forget altogether the ways of might, the ways of hatred, and the ways of force. Force is no remedy, we know it. Try the Jesus way. “I must,” said the Saviour, “I must go to Jerusalem, because I must show them that the only way to win is to love.”

Will you take that stand—I must serve, I must help, for the only way is the way of Love. I call you, friends, to the greatest of lives, I call you to Love, to kindness, to gentleness, and by and by there will be a wonderful Easter. The little deeds of Love will fall seemingly uselessly, just as the leaves of last autumn fell. Just as the hidden flowers fight the cold winter in the snow, all the good deeds of life will be forgotten, just as the deeds of Jesus were forgotten, but by and by there will come a wondrous resurrection and the life of the Spirit will be supreme, and in our cities nothing shall walk that is found abominable, or that worketh lies, and the Eternal Spirit will be King.

I call you, friends. Will you come? Will you give yourselves to the way of the Spirit?

Let us pray.

We thank Thee, Father, for Thy wondrous gifts. We bow in humility before Thy wondrous might. Help us, frail workers of Thine, children of Thine, ever to remember our heritage, help us ever to remember our glorious possessions.

We are Thine, the world—the wondrous palace—is Thine. Help us as we walk through this life to realize this great joy, and to be worthy of that which is placed within us and around us. Amen.

THE HOME LIFE OF JESUS

After a period of silent prayer we will join together in prayer.

We thank Thee, Heavenly Father, for this day when our work is put on one side, when we can leave the turmoil and the rush of the city, and when together or separate we can think of higher things and contemplate the better life.

Be with us all throughout this day. May each hour of the day be pregnant with blessing. In God's House may we learn of God. In our own homes may God be blessed. And in our conversations with our friends may we help and be helped towards wiser thinking and better living.

Be with us in the books we read, in the thoughts that we think, and in the plans that we make. May the day thus be really a Holy Day. May it shape our life, and where we have been foolish, where we have sinned, may we learn better, and be back home again to-day in the soul's home with God.

May this blessing of Divine help be the lot of all men and women this day. Wherever men are met in worship, in every church, in every form of faith and belief in whatsoever creed, wherever men and women are seeking God, may they see Him. May God be revealed to all earnest souls. And where men and women may be careless to-day, where the day may be used unwisely, still somehow may there be whispers heard of better things and may this day even with such be God's day, and help so to make us all God's men and women.

Be in every city in this land, and with all, of all nationalities. Where some are thinking of their homes across

the sea, bless them; and where some, perhaps, are disconsolate in their new surroundings, may the day be a help to them; and where, perhaps, some are dissatisfied and planning various things, may this day somehow restrain and guide them. May our cosmopolitan cities everywhere find some help from this day, and may our smaller towns and villages find and feel Thy presence.

Throughout the whole of this land may men and women touch the hem of the Divine Garment and be made whole.

And we pray for the nations across the sea. Be with them in their unrest. Be with them as they are suffering from the after effects of the war. As they are preaching revenge and perhaps hatred, be with them, and perhaps, in some way, may this Divine day teach Divine lessons and roll the world a little nearer the world that we should like to see.

Again we pray for Thy blessing on ourselves. Grant that every one of us may grow as we are here in graciousness and in the knowledge of our Master. Amen.

In the passage of Scripture that I read in the Gospel according to St. Mark, chapter vi, there is this sentence, or this question: "Is not this the carpenter?"

I want to speak, this morning, on something about which I know very little. I was going to say, I know nothing. It seems almost foolish to try to speak on that of which I know nothing, but probably you are thinking in your own minds that other speakers have done that before me.

I want to speak of the years of the life of Jesus, of which we do know practically nothing. Jesus probably died when he was about thirty-three. All we have any record of is the last two years or two years and a half, and even that record is very short. If you pick up St.

Mark's Gospel, you can read it in half an hour. So all that we do know of Jesus are those two and a half years, whose record can be read in half an hour. Of the thirty and one-half years before that we know practically nothing for certain.

What was taking place during those thirty years? What was he doing? Where was he learning? What was he thinking, during those thirty years?

I am inclined to think that those thirty years are more important than the two years and a half of which we know something, for those thirty years were the years of preparation. We are apt to think that the years which we know about are the important years in anybody's life, but the years that we don't know anything about are equally important. We shall all remember, and probably histories will be written, without number, of the four years of the War, but the years before the War were the years that really brought it on. The years that we didn't take much notice of, and the thoughts that we didn't think much about, were the cause of the War. The quiet years are the years that do the work. The well-known years are simply the years when the result is shown.

So it is with Jesus. For two years and a half he lived a public life. For thirty and a half years we don't know anything, but those thirty and a half years made those two and a half years: they were the years of preparation, and they were the foundation on which the later life was built.

I want, this morning, then, to try to see if we cannot

find out what Jesus was doing during those thirty years. Of course, we all know the life in a village, in a little, scattered, untidy village, out of the way of the rush of life. You know that a life in a village is like the life he lived thirty years.

As regards his home where he lived, it was a square or oblong one-story house. Have you noticed, in the whole of the Gospels there is only one house mentioned that was two-story? Jesus, evidently, didn't mingle with houses of that kind. He has told us of only one house where there was an upper story. That was the house in which he had the Last Supper.

He lived, then, in a one-story, oblong house. It was very likely mud. For we find in the illustrations—all I am getting at now is the illustration that he gives in those two and a half years of public life—we find in one of those illustrations that they took off the roof of the house and let a man down into the house. The houses were square or oblong. To make the roof they put large branches of wood across, and then smaller branches on top of that, and then mud on the top of that.

My books are many of them marked to-day by the rain that came through mud like that. It was not absolutely waterproof. It was about as waterproof as the bricks that we buy to-day.

It was a very simple thing to take off that mud and to take up one or two of the branches, and the roof would be off that part of the house.

It was, therefore, a cheaply built house that Jesus lived in.

Then we gather from the further illustrations that it was a small one, for when a man—there is this illustration—when a man knocked at the door, like asking for bread, the man inside could shout out from his bed and ask the man without what he wanted. It was, therefore, a little house, or they could not shout out like that from within the house. Then also, again, it was small, because we are told Jesus gives us this illustration, if you light a taper—their candles, of course, were simply saucers with a bit of wick in the centre—if you light this wick, it gives light to the whole house. It was a very poor light. As you know, a candle light is. But the house was so little that even the candle light showed all over the house.

Then, again, he was a widow's son. We find that question asked, "Is not this the son of Mary?" And it is asked in rather a scornful way. A widow's son was not considered much even in a village. Jesus was simply a widow's son, and he was the oldest boy in a family, probably, of seven. Now you know what that means—the oldest boy of a family of seven, with no father. That boy has got to do something to keep the house together. So he was evidently pretty hard-working, and he knew very well what poverty meant. For we find this illustration, that when his mother—we suppose his mother, or some woman near—lost ten cents (we should not think much about that, if we lost ten cents, we should probably not bother looking for it)—it was so much that she went and told the neighbors about it, and they were all anxious, and when she found it again there was a

regular jollification. Evidently, Jesus knew what poverty was.

And then as we read further on we find, I am afraid, a rather painful implication. We are obliged to come to the conclusion that the man was not always happy. His mother didn't understand him. And you know what it means when the boy and his mother do not understand each other. They both may be in the right, and yet there is an awkward feeling. Evidently, the mother of Jesus didn't understand him.

I often feel a little amused—it is one of the ironies of life—that the Church, the Roman Catholic Church, has made Mary have such an important position in their worship. The reason, of course, is theological. The Church made Jesus a singularly fine person, and made him, as it were, a long way off from you and me. And so the world wanted somebody nearer, and they said, "Make the mother of Jesus nearer." But the mother of Jesus is a very different person from the one the Roman Catholic Church pictures. She didn't understand her son, and went even so far as to say—you remember—that he was out of his mind. And when, one day, he was speaking in a crowd, she even went into the crowd and tried to stop him. A very awkward position both for the young man and the mother. And the brothers even went with her and tried to stop the young man from speaking. And I wonder if we find an echo of that in the words of Jesus later. Somebody said to him, "Your mother is outside there." And he said, "Who is my mother? He that doeth the will of my Father is my mother and my

sister." I wonder if there was not a little bitterness in that. And then he said, a little later, "He that hateth not his mother is not worthy of me." Was there not a little echo there of the difference of opinion in that little home, when Jesus felt he must do what his mother distinctly disliked?

Such were the early years of Jesus, in a little home, bearing misunderstanding, and working pretty hard, for I dare say his hard work very often cut his hands, and lamed him, but he had to go on. And the Scripture later says that he learned by the things he suffered. He probably learned how to cut wood without cutting himself. He learned by cutting himself, he learned by hurting himself, he learned by the things he suffered. As we all do.

Such, then, was the early life. What can we learn from it? It is wonderful that a life lived like that has done such things. There was not a single day of college life. There probably was not a single day of schooling. He probably had no books at all. I wonder where he learned what he knew. The only guess that I can make at it is this. When he had worked pretty hard all day, perhaps when he had had a little disagreement with his mother, when it became evening, I think he probably quietly went out of the little village on to the mountains near, and there sat down and thought. That is the schooling that he got, sitting on the mountains alone thinking.

If you and I would do that more, sit and think in quietude more, I think we should be better men and

women. The best man is the man who has thought most, generally. And Jesus learned what he knew, very largely, by thinking, by observing the things around him. You notice that whenever he preached afterwards, whenever he preached at all, he always used the simplest illustrations, just the things he had seen. He knew about the village, he knew about the flowers, he knew about the silences, and when he preached he just simply used those simple things, and yet he preached, shall I say as no man in the world has ever preached, before or since? It is a marvellous thing that one in any such surroundings should so shape the world.

Now what can we learn from it? For that is why I have taken the subject. What can we learn from this carpenter? "Is not this the carpenter?" Now what can the carpenter teach us?

I am not going to say a word about his theological position. The world has quarreled about that ever since Jesus lived, and when all the quarreling is over we shall not know much about it. God's ways are bigger than our minds and we can never be sure that we can gain any theory of Jesus the Divine. The world is seventy million years old at least, and the world is a baby compared with other worlds. What can we know about it?

Don't let's quarrel about the theological position of Jesus, for we are not big enough to know it. But we can look at Jesus and see what he is and then try to imitate him. That is a simple matter.

Now let us see some of the things that he did during his life.

The first thing that I always admire about him, and the thing that I try to imitate in him mostly, is his thought about God. You know he always called God "Father." You know, when he was only twelve years old, it is said that he went to Jerusalem, and, boylike, got away from his parents, and they found him talking in the Temple with the ministers who were there. And when the mother called him he said, "Well, I must be about my Father's business." And he kept that up all his life. His "Father," when he thought about God. You see he had not any earthly father. Joseph had died. And so Jesus thought of another Father in place of the father who had gone before.

All the way through his life we have that thought. When he was poor—when he was wondering what clothes to put on, how he could buy a simple suit—you remember, he said to the friends around, "God clothes the lilies, how much more shall He clothe you!"

And then when he saw his friends passing out he said, "In my Father's house are many mansions."

From beginning to end Jesus thought of the Great Power Around, as like a Father. I try to copy that. Friends, I don't know much, and you don't know much, about God, but from what we do know let us think of Him as a Father caring for us, guiding us, and in His great Mansion having many rooms where we pass from one to another.

Then, in the second place, I always think of Jesus working quietly at home. As I have said, he was the oldest boy. There was a family of six to bring up, and

he stayed at home until he had brought them up, although they disliked him, as I have said, in many ways. They didn't understand him. He stayed at home at the joiner's bench until his brothers were wage earners. He stayed at home until his mother was out of her financial difficulty, because the other boys began to earn. And all the time he knew he was a genius, for a genius knows it, he cannot help it. All the time he was wanting to help and to serve and probably to preach. Probably, for years, he wanted to do something to help his country. But he did nothing. He stayed at home. Home was first. I like that about him.

One thing that I have never liked of American life—and the same thing now unfortunately prevails in English life—is the fact that home is becoming less important. I don't think that that old song, "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home," I don't think that that would be written to-day. If the author of that had not written it when he did, I don't think it would be written to-day. Because we don't feel like that. Automobiles take people out of their homes, the motion picture shows take others out of their homes, and home is simply a third place, where we sleep. Is it not so? Our architecture helps towards it. I don't know, I have never lived there, but I cannot imagine people speaking of love in a flat.

It is not like the old home. My picture of a home, that I always hold in the background of my mind, is a separate house. It may be little, as Jesus' was. I lived six years in a house just like the house that Jesus lived in, just as simple, without any floors in it, and with-

out any doorways in it when we went there. But it was a home. I picture a home a place, at any rate, with a spare room in it where the boys can play about, making noise, and making a mess without making any trouble. Then with a back yard, or a garden, where the father and the mother have a little place to themselves.

Friends, I am sure of this, without any exception, we have got to get back to making more of the home. If we lessen our home attractions, which we are doing in every city in the world—I am not simply mentioning Boston; every city in the world is making home less and less important—we lose one incentive to life. And home is the place where a nation is built. Home is the place where a man is made, and he will never be made anywhere else equally successfully. We may try it, but we shall fail eventually.

Jesus, the joiner, the carpenter, made a home for twenty-nine years, and I think that had something to do with his two and a half years of public life.

Then, again, Jesus did something else that I cannot help but want to copy. He determined to quietly do his work at hand. As I have said, he was in a little valley, a little detached valley, away from the main roads. But about two miles outside the village there was one of the main roads, that went from Jerusalem to Galilee. Galilee was the busy, inhabited portion of Palestine. It was the New England of America. It was the place that was active and go-ahead. And this road went from Jerusalem to Galilee. And I have no doubt that Jesus very often went on to that main road. When he did, he

would see a very cosmopolitan life. He would see the Roman soldiers marching with imperial tread. And I dare say he would wish that they were back in Rome, for you don't like to see a foreign army in your own country. Then, again, he would see the Pharisees—the priests—and the Sadducees walking on that road. Then he would see the Egyptians with their camels and their merchandise, crossing from Egypt to Damascus. Then he would see Arabs going the other way. Then every now and then he would see a zealot, as he was called, a man who was determined to free his country, probably he would be talking to himself as he passed along, and people would whisper and say, "There goes a patriot who is going to sometime help to free our country."

He would see a varied life, hear varied discussions, hear varied calls, and yet he decided that if Palestine was to be helped, it was not to be by the noisy way, it was to be by the quiet way of service. And he went home to live twenty-nine years quietly, while every one else was agitated about Palestine. I cannot help but think that Jesus, again, was extremely right. If we wish to make a perfect Boston—and we do wish that—I know the claims outside have importance. I know that every person ought to understand the various attempts at self-government, every person ought to be alive as to what is passing. But the way to perfection lies in your heart and mine. Boston, New England, old England, and devastated Europe will be perfect when the inhabitants are perfect. And not before.

Jesus ever taught that, in his quiet way, at home, and he was so successful in what he did that there is not a man in the Western world to-day who does not admire Jesus. He is the one figure that has helped to shape the world by his quietude.

Friends, I ask you to-day, I appeal to you to-day. We want to make ourselves noble men and women. We want to make a Roxbury that is noble. The one way to do it is to live as we have seen that Jesus lived, in our own hearts love the good, in our own lives serve the good, and day by day go about doing good.

We call him Master, and you know what he said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my Father"—meaning, not every one that can say things theologically—"shall enter into the Kingdom, but he that doeth the will of my Father in Heaven."

Are you doing that will? None of us are doing it perfectly. We are trying, we are failing, but let us go on trying.

May this service this morning help us all to go back home and try to do the will of our Father in Heaven. And may we go back home to turn the pages of our own Book and read about the Carpenter and how he lived. God help us so to do.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, help us in the daily life we have to live, help us to do the will of our Father, as far as we can. Help us, as far as we can, to be really men and women serving God and helping man. Amen.

CAN WE STILL FOLLOW JESUS?

Let us join in silent prayer.

Our Father, we seek Thy guidance this day. We are oft perplexed and disturbed, hearing differing voices speak in our lives. The higher and the lower contend in us, the material and the immaterial oppose themselves in our hearts. At one time we walk with one set of forces, and our eyes longingly look toward another fold and other companions. We often know not what to do or how to do. To-day, we would that the higher be emphasized and that the lower be minimized, we would that the better shall seem more attractive, the higher more alluring, and the ways of Jesus more applicable. Help us as we worship, so that we may become more and more enthralled in Spirit and more free from the ways of the material.

And this blessing we also ask for all our neighbors and fellow citizens and companion worshippers.

May men to-day rise out of the valley towards the heights, may men to-day leave behind the temporal and think of the Eternal. May men and women everywhere to-day walk the streets of the Holy City and leave behind the lower ways that sometimes appeal.

May the day be a Sabbath to all our friends and neighbors and fellow-worshippers, and may the Holy Spirit teach holy ways.

And we pray likewise for men and women in a collective sense. Be with the nations. It seems harder to be Christlike collectively than it is to be so individually. It seems sometimes that we have a double morality, one for the home and one for the nation. Help the nations to-day, that they may sit at the feet of the Father, and may some

lessons be learned, some ways be loved, that have hitherto been neglected. May men to-day learn that the Father is waiting to help, and that only as nations lean on Him are nations great and powerful.

Help all who are disturbed, help all who are disquieted, and around the world for a time may the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, abide with men. Amen.

Not long ago I received a parcel of books from across the water, all of them concerned with Jesus, one of them by a Professor, entitled, "Can we still follow Jesus?"

There is always an absorbing interest in the life of Jesus. You will have seen mentioned that new life published by the Italian Papini and you will have noticed what a tremendous sale it is having on both sides of the Atlantic. The questioning concerning Jesus, his personality, his words and his ways, has an attraction that the words and ways of no other man have. When we read his life it has an effect that no other life has. But when we leave aside this attractive life there comes into our hearts a series of questions. We acknowledge the beauty, we feel the charm, we long to be obedient to the allurements, but can we? As that Professor says, "Can we follow Jesus? Can we do as he advises? Can we feel as he suggests?"

Of course, before we can give an answer, it is always well to see the man himself. We cannot too often try to picture what Jesus himself was like. Let me again, therefore, recall to you the probable appearance and life of the Master.

He lived, most likely, for twenty-five or twenty-six years in a two-room house; and it is possible it may

have been only one room. A one-room house, with the kitchen and joiner or carpenter's shop and storehouse all combined. Perhaps one room was set aside for the family uses. But I should not be surprised if all were in one room. There probably would be no chairs. I am not sure there would be a table. There would be a very simple cooking arrangement. And when sleeping time came all that would be done would be that the rugs were spread on the floor. A simplicity that you and I cannot imagine, or, at least, cannot realize. He never, probably, had above two or three days' supply of work or food ahead. He was the food-winner for a little family, the father having died. All his friends were equally simple, equally poor, quite dependent on the daily bread. If one were sick, all the neighbors lent a hand. If any one grew old, the neighbors or the relatives were very glad to take the old mother or father into the house. With this simple family arrangement the members of the family could be very elastic. I have seen in a Mexican adobe house as many as twenty living together, and probably the Mexicans lived exactly as Jesus lived.

Jesus himself was a genius in spiritual things. He thought and wondered and questioned as probably no man has done before or since, and he had a peculiar interest in the deeper things of life. He was extremely fond of being alone. There was no joy to him like leaving every one else and being alone. And I can imagine when he was alone he plucked the wayside flowers and looked at them and loved them.

Then, by and by, there came a change in his life

and he began to teach. Now, what would his teaching naturally consist of? He had none of the learning that we call learning. He had none of what we call experience. He had not the slightest idea of any present-day class. I don't think he had ever seen a city with above twenty or thirty thousand people in it. He had never seen anything like our manufacturing centres. He had very little idea of many nationalities. He had lived a simple village life and he had thought alone over the deep problems of the soul and its Maker. You can thus see that when he began to speak he would have little to say of a civilization such as we know, because he had no idea of it.

And so his teaching divides itself into two classes, one conditioned on circumstances, and the other unconditioned, because of its spiritual nature. Spiritual teaching is never conditioned, and a sermon that was preached say in 1800 on spiritual things would be a good sermon to-day, and a good sermon on spiritual things spoken to-day will be a good one a hundred years hence. Spiritual things do not change.

And so the teaching of Jesus had two aspects, one concerned with what he knew as regards temporal things and conditioned by that view, the other distinctly spiritual and not conditioned at all. And I want to speak of those two aspects.

First, then, his teaching which was conditioned, shaped by his temporal surroundings. Let me mention a few. I read them purposely in the lesson.

“When any man asketh of thee, give, and hope for

nothing again." Can we do that? The very essence of our charitable teaching to-day is that we shall not give promiscuously. Talk to any charitable worker to-day and the first thing that he would say would be, "Never give anything at the door, never give anything without due inquiry, promiscuous giving is evil." When I was on the farm we used to have common stock in all our tools. If I wanted a plow of a size I didn't possess, I would go to my neighbor and get one. If he wanted anything I had, he would come and get mine. We would lend promiscuously, and think nothing about it. I am not quite so sure I would lend in Boston. I should want to know about the man who was borrowing. I should make a few inquiries before I said, "Take what you want." It is very different in a village than in a city. And so you see, to begin with, a point-blank rejection of some teachings of Jesus. We say, "Don't give without inquiry, and if you lend, be cautious."

Then, again, Jesus said, "Take no thought of to-morrow." That was quite, as I said, possible in those days. If any became old or sick, there was always a home ready, waiting. Jesus himself never, probably, had, as I have said, more than two or three days' supply ahead. But he was not worried. He knew, if anything happened, he would be provided for by his little community. There was no need to take any thought. Is that so to-day? I should say, without any hesitation, that every young man who gets married ought to insure himself. I should say he would make a mistake if he didn't so do. It is the duty of every married

person to provide for the wife in case of emergency—and the children. Then I should say to every one, "You ought never to live up to your income; you always ought to live below, whether it be large or small. You always ought to live at a little less rate than your income, so that if sickness come, you will have something ready." Now, that is quite contrary to what Jesus said. I don't follow Jesus, therefore, in that respect. I do take thought, and I think every one ought to take thought for to-morrow. No person has a right to live right up to his income.

Then Jesus said, "Resist not him that is evil." Now, put that in a village, and you see what it means. If any man is quarrelsome in a village, everybody knows it and everybody leaves him on one side. Nobody that is so senseless as to be always quarreling has any friend in a village. There is nothing gained at all by being quarrelsome, there is nothing gained at all by being touchy. And so if any one does you any hurt, well—take it quietly, talk it over, appeal to your neighbors and things will be right. "Resist not him that is evil." Be quiet about it and sensible, don't be too touchy. That is all right in that Eastern life. Now, supposing we take those words out and put them down to-day. How do they sound to-day? Quite different. We have, perhaps, a combination of masters; or we have, perhaps, a combination of workmen who seek, one or the other, complete personal advantage. And perhaps between the combinations there is absolutely no thought at all as regards the public, the public is simply not considered. Have we to say noth-

ing? Is there not an opportunity for the general public amidst all our complications to-day? It is a different question altogether, and I should resist evil, and as heartily as I possibly could. Again differing from the direct teaching of the Master.

Now I come to the most difficult question. Undoubtedly, Jesus was a pacifist, as we call them to-day. I have not the slightest doubt of that in my own mind. Undoubtedly, in my own mind, he was just what we should call to-day an extreme pacifist. Do I follow him? Can I follow him? Wars are the result of previous years of preparation. I do not mean warlike preparation alone. Wars are the result of previous attitudes of mind, and when those attitudes of mind have developed to a certain degree, what then? If one nation be warlike and prepares for forty years for a certain position and then presumes on this preparation, what then? If politicians make secret treaties, as they do in all countries—we on this side are not clean in that respect—and then those secret treaties by and by clash, what then? We all agree that war is hateful, that there is nothing so hateful and destructive and useless, but there are times as the result of previous policies when we ask straight out, "Shall I defend my country, or shall I not?" And I am not going to lay down a universal rule. All I am going to say is what I said straight out in El Paso when war broke out in 1914. I said what I repeat to-day, "I believe that Jesus taught under no circumstances should there be war, but if I were in England to-day, I would fight, and point-blank disregard what Jesus said." I have never yet seen

that I was wrong in making that statement. What we have to do, of course, is to watch the previous policies and take what steps we can with nations that will uphold such policies, that will move toward that position when war seems an absurd necessity, but we cannot yet take it. We cannot yet follow Jesus always as regards war.

Then there comes another question. Jesus was conditioned, as I have said, by his thinking and the thinking of the people around him. At times he contradicted himself. At certain times he certainly seemed to believe in his own coming-back immediately. There is no use in denying it. He told his disciples that before they went through Palestine the Second Coming would be realized. And at times he certainly told them that nothing was worth anything—what was the good, because the Kingdom of Heaven was coming. But, then, at other times he took a different position: the growth of the Kingdom was like the growth of the mustard seed; it was like leaven working in the meal. It was a slow growth, no one could tell when it was coming, or how it was growing. He contradicted himself. We do not accept his teaching, at all, of the second coming. We accept his teaching, heartily, as regards the slow growth of the Kingdom.

Thus, wherever he was conditioned by his village life and surroundings, we are at liberty to please ourselves as regards the applicability of his words.

We all are ready to accept some texts, and we are all equally ready to reject texts that do not suit us. We all do it and we might as well acknowledge it. We can-

not follow him in many of his teachings—the teaching that was conditioned by his life.

But now I want to pass over that and enter into his great sphere. As I said, his second type of teaching was concerned with the spiritual, and here we enter on to a different ground altogether. Here we enter into a Holy of Holies. Here we listen to the teaching of the greatest teacher the world has ever seen and the grandest seer that the world has ever known. Let us, then, enter into his spiritual teaching.

First of all, he taught the immense supremacy of spiritual life. “Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all else will be added.” We all know there is no exception to it. We all know that we are more than simply material. We all feel that whatever happens outside of us, or whatever positions we gain, at least there is something else in life. We all *know* that we are part somehow of an invisible kingdom, that we are all somehow destined to a different end from what we see around. We all know that within us there is something infinitely more, infinitely greater, than the things we touch and handle. There is not a man to-day in Boston, good or bad, who does not know that, in his heart—at some time or other. I am here not simply as a man in this world, I am here as somehow part of an invisible kingdom. There is something in me of more value than all that I can touch. And Jesus stressed that as none other has done. Seek first the Kingdom, seek first the pearl of greatest price. What does it matter if you gain the whole world and lose that something within? And

whenever Jesus spoke he called that something within to a higher ground. It does not matter whether he spoke to a scholar like Nicodemus, or to a woman like Mary, or to a grafter like Zacchæus. It does not matter to whom he spoke—something was called out: they felt themselves citizens of that Heavenly Kingdom.

And then he stressed our high calling. "You and your Father are one, live with the Father."

Friends, I have said some things that we cannot be obedient unto. I am saying some things now that we cannot be disobedient unto. Where Jesus spoke spiritually we have to be obedient or die. There is no choice. Either we must seek first the things of the Kingdom, or we lose ourselves. There we must be obedient to his spiritual invitation or we must die.

Then, the second stress that Jesus laid was that self-seeking is self-losing. "He that seeketh his life shall lose it, he that loseth his life for the things of the Kingdom shall find it." Jesus always stressed, as you know, the something within. He had no patience with ceremonies. He had little place in his constitution for ritual. He cared not one jot for what other religious people did. What he knew was that what mattered was his own self and his Father, and that when he himself was lost in his Father all was well, so lost that he forgot all about himself. And you remember—I have often mentioned it, for it is a favorite parable—you remember when he pictured the judgment. Those who were rewarded didn't know why they were rewarded, they didn't even know they had been good. And those punished didn't even

know they had been bad. It is the self within that counts. And when that self is so married to the noble that it doesn't know what it is doing, then we are on the way to the life of Jesus. When I do things, and don't know that I am doing them, because I am so lost in the Master, then I am his disciple. Directly we do things conscious of ourselves, we are on the low level. Whenever I preach a sermon and think of myself in doing it; if ever there flashes through my mind when I am speaking, "You are doing pretty well," that sermon is doomed. Directly a speaker has in him a suggestion that he is doing well, he is lost. Directly a painter thinks of the fame that will come to him through the strokes which his genius can make, that painter is undone. Directly a writer, in writing a book, thinks of the fame that will come to him through that book, the writer is undone. When a work is done unconsciously, serving for the sake of service, we are forgetful of all that there is behind; writing the book for the good it will do; painting the picture for the lesson it will teach; doing for the sake of the service that will be rendered.

He that seeketh himself, loseth himself. He that forgetteth all about himself, findeth life. Now, that is an eternal truth that must not be neglected. Can we follow Jesus? We must, or all is lost. The nation must follow him like that or be lost. Directly we as Americans follow the ways—I won't say it. You will find the answer.

Then, another great lesson that Jesus taught was, "Do not thine own, but thy Master's will." "Not thine own,

but my will be done." This follows, of course, what I have said. We are all the audience chamber of contending voices. One set of voices always says, "Do thine own way. Shall I not do what I like with mine own?" Another set of voices says, "I am not mine own. I belong to the great Father. The great universal Spirit is ever speaking and I must be obedient to that." And so there comes this great test. Shall I do what I think best, or what I like? Or shall I do what the higher voices, that are sounding in me, advise me to do? I can well imagine that Jesus had just as much fighting on those lines as we have. When the last great conflict came, I can imagine that turmoil in his spirit. On the one hand, was hatred and death. On the other side, there was a glorious future for him, and if he had gone there, he would have been perfectly safe. Which should he do? I am certain his own little nature would say, "Go back home." I am equally certain the higher voice said to him, "Go and meet your fate. Thou hast taught certain truths, go and live them out. And if thou diest, all right." On the one hand was safety, on the other hand was death. The same differences appeal to you and me many a time. There are certain policies that are safe. There are certain policies that are fateful. There are certain ways in which we can make money, there are certain ways in which we are obliged to sacrifice it. And we stand at the parting of the ways. And Jesus said, "When the time comes, do not thine own, but thy Master's will"—"Not my own, but Thy will be done." Can we be obedient? We either must—we either must, or we

are never the same again. There may come a time when again the life is in the balance, and I may say, "Well, everybody else does it; I will take the gain." Nobody else knows anything about the conflict, nobody condemns us. But our own heart shames us and we take a lower level ever after. We talk about fallen women. We are fallen men and women then. We have chosen the lower. We have done our own will and we have left the higher will neglected.

Friends, I cannot—I cannot emphasize enough that when it comes to the spiritual teaching of Jesus, we must obey, there is no way out. When the higher voices call, we are compelled to answer, or to lose our souls.

Will you listen to this teaching of the Master?

God help us to be his disciples. God help us so that when the time of difficulty comes, we can say, "Not mine own, but Thy will be done."

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the teaching that we read in the life of our Master. Help us to follow him. Help us to be obedient to his higher lessons. Help us to walk on his side. And so as he himself desired, be at one with God and himself. Amen.

THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REFUSED

Our Father, may we all be close to Thy side. May we feel Thy nearness, may we hear Thy words in our hearts, and may the hour we spend in Thy company be truly an hour of inspiration, of guidance. May we gain comfort and strength. And help us so that when we go home after our worship we may be stronger and better men and women.

May the hour be truly solemn, sacred, holy, and so may our lives be altogether purified. Amen.

In Psalm cxviii, which I read, there occurs an old Jewish proverb that was very often quoted. We have, perhaps, in later years given that proverb a new meaning. But then it was certainly a proverb representing an universal truth. It occurs in verse 22—"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner."

*"All are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time;
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.*

*"Nothing useless is, or low;
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.*

“For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.”

Longfellow, in those words, expressed an universal truth. We are all builders. Every day we build, sometimes wisely, sometimes nobly, sometimes ill, sometimes so badly that others have to pull down what we erected. We are all building day by day, but there is this difference between us and most builders. We, like others, select and reject. We select certain experiences and say those shall go into our building. We reject other experiences and say they are useless. But somehow, whether we select or reject, our deeds mysteriously enter into our building. And sometimes, perhaps, after a few years of our work we stand back and survey what we have done. Something as an artist when he is painting stands back to see his picture. So, sometimes, you and I in a moment or two of leisure stand back to see what we have builded. And then, unless I mistake, we all encounter a great surprise—the wall which we have raised, or the building in which we have assisted, contains material very different from what we expected. Somehow the stones which we selected and thought very, very suitable seem out of place and somehow the experiences which we disliked and rejected stand there, and stand out beautifully, being the head stone of the corner, or the corner stone of some great erection. Very often the proverb that I used is true—the stone which the build-

ers rejected is the head stone of the corner. To-day I want to speak of that collectively and individually, for it is true in both ways.

First, collectively. We are all trying, and men have always been trying, to build what we call civilization (I do not know, and you do not know, how many years men have lived), but they have never yet succeeded. No race of men, and no generation of men, has ever built a civilization that has lasted long. Perhaps we may say that a thousand years is about the time that a developed civilization can live. Perhaps the Egyptians are the only ones who have eclipsed that period. Somehow we build our civilization and it falls into ruin. There is no exception. And some writers say—I will leave it with you to judge whether it be true or not—some writers say that our civilization is approaching its destined time, and that it is showing signs of crumbling.

We erect our building with great pains and sorrow and travail, but somehow we have never yet built well enough to have the structure stand.

Why is it?

It may be that as builders we select the wrong material. It may be that we are unwise in our choice of the material which shall really be used. Hitherto we have always selected about the same type of material. If you open up any history, you will find that the great names, or what we might call the corner stones of the histories, are generals, admirals, monarchs, kings or queens. So true is this that when we read a consecutive story of vari-

ous kings and generals we practically read a history of a nation. We have said, So and So is the great Athenian, the great Roman; Pharaoh So and So is the great Egyptian warrior; So and So are the great men of such and such a century; and we have placed them right at the corner stone of the arch; and somehow the arch has begun to crumble, and, as I have said, in a thousand years it has fallen down.

Have we made a mistake concerning the builder, or the material selected?

I almost think that we are beginning to talk about selecting differently, for when I now go back to history I find there are strange reversals in judgment. For instance, the despised slave Epictetus is now seeming to be important, the rejected searcher Socrates is now loved, the persecuted scholar Bunyan is now respected, the scorned teacher Confucius is now remembered with wonder, the satirized dreamer Jesus stands highest of all. The materials that we once rejected are beginning now to stand out, and when the wise civilization comes there seem to be certain corner stones that will be used to build the nation's life—the wise scholars and the humble servants; and when any nation or civilization is wise enough to say, "My strength lies there," I think probably the thousand years of a civilization will be prolonged.

And we make the same mistake in our private life. I know I have made that mistake in mine. I know that when I look back now I take very different measurements from what I did twenty years ago, and I suppose if I live another twenty years I shall again change my judgment.

As we are in the busy part of life we consider the great things, say, the material successes that we have made, the fortunate investments that we made, perhaps the great speech that once we made, perhaps the fine home that once we builded, perhaps the faith that once carried our name with it. Those are the things that rise as we go along, those are the things that we say are making our life what it is, and other things we hate. We even say, Were it not for so and so, I should have been better still. If I had only been in a different position, I should have made a better record still. If only for such and such a year when I had my sickness, or if only for such and such a year when I met my sorrow—if it had not been for that, I should have done better still, but that spoiled my life. Don't we all say that? I know I say it, if it had not been for such and such a misfortune, I should have done better still. And then when we stand back and look at our lives expecting that great thing to be the corner stone, we find a very different material there.

Let me mention a few of the upsets in private life that somehow wonderfully speak on this topic.

Fabre was a poor teacher, a public school teacher, and he made a discovery. He invented a certain dye, and it just seemed as though he was ready to walk into a fortune. And at the very same time somebody else found a cheaper way of making the same dye; and all his promise of financial success floated away. So he turned to teaching. He said he would take a girls' school, and he began splendidly, but he was too advanced for his

work, and the authorities around about made him close his school: they didn't want girls to be taught that way. So he was minus his fortune and minus his school. And the man was terribly bitter. If it had not been for that other discoverer, if it had not been for the prejudice of the people around him, he would have built splendidly. And, to-day, there is not a reader in the world that does not know of him. Those two experiences are the corner stone of the arch of his life. If it had not been for them, he never would have built as we know it to-day.

Then let me mention another name. The Jews were dispersed. They were intensely patriotic. Why should they not stay in Judaea? Instead, they were dispersed to the four winds, to the pain of every patriotic Jew. But if there had been no dispersal, there would have been no St. John's Gospel. The Fourth Gospel, written out of Judaea altogether, came because of the dispersal. Without that the Jews would have lost that corner stone of early Jewish history.

A remarkable young man lived in Scotland, and he contracted tuberculosis. All his friends who looked at him said, What a pity that that young man is doomed to die! Why is it that a life like that should be so wasted? If it had not been for that tuberculosis, we should have had no record of some of the world's most beautiful prayers uttered by Robert Louis Stevenson, in the South Sea Islands. That tuberculosis grew to be the corner stone of the wonderful arch that Stevenson has erected.

Another young man had an incurable disease, in

France, and all his friends said, What a pity, what a shame it is, that a scholar like that should be taken. There are thousands of men we could do without. What is God doing to take a man like that? And Amiel's sickness gave us "Amiel's Journal," the most spiritual help that I know in his century. Amiel's sickness is the corner stone of that wonderful arch "Amiel's Journal."

One day, outside the walls of a city, a young man was stoned to death, and I imagine the thinkers about saying, What a shame that a young man like that should be stoned to death. If they had taken a Greek, a stranger, maybe it would not have mattered, but to stone a man like Stephen, what a loss it is. If Stephen had not died, we should have had no Paul, and Paul's life has for its corner stone, practically, the shame he felt at the death of Stephen.

Another disaster in Jewish history, when the Jews' patriotism suffered its rudest shock—the Babylonians came down and destroyed that loved home, and all the patriotic Jews lamented it. You know the Psalms. You know those Psalms of sorrow, where the Jews sing: "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Beautiful to an extreme.

And if it had not been for that other disaster, there would have been no Second Isaiah, the world's greatest preacher. The world's greatest preacher has for the corner stone of his arch the disaster to Israel.

Shall I go on? You can count those lives in every page of history.

A young man again—you see it is just in the prime of life that these things happen, just when the young men think they can do the best work that these things happen, that is the hardness of it—the young man, in England, had read all of the military history he could, and he was destined, he thought, to be a great general. And just when it looked as if he could do it his health broke and he was unfit for the army. What a shame. He might have been another Napoleon, and instead he became, shall I say, one of England's greatest preachers, F. W. Robertson of Brighton. I know no sermons better to read than Robertson's. When I read them, and see that arch that he erected, the corner stone is a sickness.

Another young man wanted to preach, and a Judge said to him: "We want none of your preaching, and if you will preach, into jail you go." And into jail he went. Should not we have said, Why is it that one of the best is put in jail? The pity of it. The loss of it. The disgrace of it. And if Bunyan had not been put in jail, we probably should never have seen Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." The corner stone of that arch is an unjust sentence by a foolish Judge.

Another young man—I didn't notice before that it was all young men, when I collected these names I didn't notice that—but another young man had a friend whom he loved more closely than a brother. They studied together and took their holidays together. This friend died. And the young man, the remaining young man said, The shame of it. Is there a God who permits it? Nature, apparently, is absolutely careless and indifferent,

else Arthur Hallam would never have died. And that death gives us Tennyson's greatest poem "In Memoriam." When you read "In Memoriam" you can put as the corner stone of it all Arthur Hallam's death.

In all the instances that I mention not one of them would have selected as the corner stone of his work what evidently proved to be so. Every one of them, without exception, would have said, If it had not been for that, I should have done better. And perhaps it is so in your life. I know it is so in mine.

The thing that you like least, the experience you think your worst hardship, if you face it aright, will prove, perhaps, the corner stone of your arch that you are building.

All through life I see a Cross
Where sons of God yield up their breath.
There is no gain except by loss,
There is no life except by death.

There is no gain except by loss. There is no life except by death. And the loss, that death, the Cross, are the corner stones which are the most beautiful part of our building, if we only use them wisely.

Of course, I know, despite all I have said, I know that to-morrow or the day after if a sorrow comes, I know we shall misjudge it. We cannot somehow help it. I know that we shall select in the future very foolishly. If I may, perhaps, by some strange chance make a speech that is acceptable, I shall say, There, I have done good work. And if I meet a secret sin, and I tell nobody about it; I fight it day after day—and I am ashamed of hav-

ing to fight it, so ashamed that I would not tell any one; perhaps that secret fight is worth a million times more to me than that speech I happened to make. And perhaps if I meet the sorrow, I shall reject it, but maybe it will make me better than any achievement else I could gain.

God help you to judge wisely, whatever the future may have in store for you as you are building. And perhaps the very corner stone of all your life will be the thing you dislike most. For it is true, it is universally true, "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head stone of the corner."

Let us pray.

Help us, our Father, in our life's task. We are thankful that the building does not altogether depend on ourselves. But help us to choose our material wisely, and the days as they come to use wisely. Amen.

JESUS, THE FOUNDER OF OUR FREEDOM

Help us, Holy Spirit, so that we may think now on the things which are noble, pure, beautiful, lasting. May we consider carefully the fruits of the Spirit, and seek after them, and devote our lives to the worthy—we are so apt to seek after other things, we are so apt to be anxious and worried about the things which are tangible, and apt to forget that if the things of the Spirit are ours—if we find the Kingdom spiritually, all other things necessary are added. Help each one of us now. May we seek all that is worthy, and may we quietly but earnestly determine to live more and more in the worthy, and leave the rest on one side.

And as we would thus seek the life that is worth living, we also ask that there may be an influence brought so that others may seek as we are seeking.

May selfishness, self-advantage and self-seeking be out of every sanctuary, but may all who are worshipping, with one mind, try to be as their innermost selves urge them to be. May thus every sanctuary be really holy, and may every worshipper go home cleansed and purified. May that which is base to-day die, and may only that which is abiding be strengthened. May every speaker in every sanctuary and in every meeting-place give himself or herself to expounding the things that belong to the Spirit, may all who lead in song alike sing of the riches of the Spirit, and so, for a time, may all worshippers, the world over, be one family trying to touch the hands of the Great Father.

Be with the older men and women this day, so that this may be one of the best of their Sabbaths; be with the younger ones, so that this may be a beginning of a still better life. Be with busy men having a load on their shoulders; for a time may the load be lightened through the

consciousness of the nearness of God. And be with all who are in weakness and in sickness, and may the sick for a time be filled with the presence of God.

Be with all lands, so that to-day all governors and great ones of the earth may be humble, childlike, and living for the things that abide.

May the nations think to-day, for a time, of service, of being of help, of doing duty, and of themselves leading others Godward, and thinking on these things, may the nations forget the things that are temporal and seek the possessions that are eternal. Amen.

I ask you to think over this morning "Jesus, the Founder of our Freedom."

Man has always been conscious that there is more in life than there seems. At no time has man been satisfied just simply with the tangible. He has always felt somehow that there was something else, and he has always been in some way seeking for that Something Else. At first, he sought largely to please that Something Else, to placate and satisfy that Something Else. Later, I hope, he has begun to learn that we have not to please that Something Else at all: what we have got to do is to live worthy of that Something Else. And all through his seeking he has sought in much the same ways. In every clime and in every era men have sought very much on similar lines, and so there has always been a tendency for thought to develop a kind of technique, a fixed order of search, and a kind of organization concerning the Unseen. So, gradually, there has grown up in every country what you might call a definite, fixed organization, fixed priesthoods and priests who control the organization; and, gradually—in every religion it is the same—

there has been one way over which to walk and to seek, a definite highway, and all who go out of the highway are trespassing, they are unsafe: there is but one way to find the Unseen, or God.

And, parallel with this there has always been another movement. Men have always been learning, they have been seeking, they have always been finding new thoughts and new ideas. They have never been satisfied. I heard during the week a lecture on the climbing of Mount Everest, by one of the men who tried to climb it, and he said, "Well, what was the good of it?" After he told us all the excitement and all the danger and all the almost terrifying endurances, he said, "What is the good of it?" There is a goal ahead that has never been reached, and man wants to reach it. That is the explanation. And it has been so with all life. There is a goal ahead, there is a mountain summit that has never been trodden and man has something in him that says, "I am going to tread it."

Men have always been seeking, and, of course, as they sought, they gained new life. We don't think at all to-day as men thought a few years ago, because we have learned new things.

These two movements have always been clashing. There has been the fixed movement that says, "Man has sought this way and this is what man has found. This is the way of life." And then there has been the other movement which has said, "Yes, but I want to find what there is beyond the horizon; and I find that *this* is beyond the horizon, which is different from what we have been

accustomed to." And so there have been priests who stood for the attained, and there have been prophets who have been trying to find out the unattained, and the two never quite get on together.

The ordinary fixed way is the highway, but there are always men who want to climb over the hedge and go through the fields and find new flowers and new beauty. And the man who is content with the fixed, and the man who wants to find the new, have never much in common, they never live together harmoniously.

So, all through religion there has been this strife. The priest has said, "The law, which was once delivered"; and the prophet has said, "The Lord has yet more light and truth to break forth from His Word." You understand where the difference comes. The world owes much to both. Experience is always a helpful teacher; we owe that to the priest, who has classified experience. But the world would never get anywhere, if it were satisfied with things as they are. Every true man wants something ahead. And so the world gains from the prophet. All ages have these prophets, these pioneers, who have always wanted to tread the untrod, who have always wanted to go through the virgin forests, who have always wanted to subdue the frozen peaks. And perhaps the greatest of them all has been Jesus, the greatest pioneer that the world has seen, and I want to speak this morning of some of the things that he taught us that were new, some of the things that he taught us that free us, if only we follow them.

But, first, let me ask you to think over what kind of

man he was. He was unlettered, he knew very little as regards scientific knowledge. His thoughts about the world, the universe, are considered to-day very childlike. He didn't know much of what we mean by knowledge. He had only lived in a village. He had begun to work, probably, when he was in his teens, and worked all the time. But he was an intense lover of Nature, and I can imagine him, when he was a lad in his teens, and when his work was done, rambling away over the hills; he got passionately fond of the distances, and in those distances he felt a touch that every real lover of Nature feels. Have you noticed that any one who loves Nature sincerely is never narrow? True Nature lovers are always broad in their thoughts. Take John Burroughs, take John Muir, take James Oliver Curwood, and the list might be enlarged: when a man loves the open spaces his soul widens out and he sees sights that are invisible to ordinary folks, he hears songs to which ordinary ears are deaf, and he makes for himself his own theology. He cannot help it. He makes for himself his own explanations of the distances and the grandeurs of life.

And then Jesus, for all his life, mixed with men. He knew what men talked about, he knew what worried men, he knew what made men anxious. And sometimes I think that ministers forget that. We love the study and books, and we get interested there, and we think that is what every one is doing; we get interested in our schemes of theology, and we think every one is interested on the same lines. I am thankful, every day of my life, that I had six years mingling with farmers, in Texas. I got an

insight of life that I never had before, of which I hope I shall never lose the effects. Jesus mingled with men and so being a broad lover of Nature and understanding sincerely just what men were interested in, he shaped his thoughts accordingly. Now let us turn to what those thoughts were, for humble as he was, unlettered as he was and simple as he was, what he thought has changed the course of history. It is a miracle. What that unlettered joiner, as we call him in England—carpenter—what he said has changed Western life as nothing else will ever change it, and would change it more, if we were wise.

Let us see, therefore, what he taught when he came into the public gaze. First of all, and the first lesson of freedom, he taught that we should not be anxious. He taught freedom from anxiety. He lived in a beautiful, fertile little tract of country. Flowers were always growing around there. Nature there was very prodigal. When he climbed the hills he had wonderful views, and he began to feel the loveliness of it all. Why should he be anxious? "If my Father so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, how much more will He clothe me! If my Father paints the lily until it is more gorgeous than any beautiful dress, how much more will He care for me!" You can see how he reached the conclusion. He lived thirty years among natural beauties, he thought they gained their beauty from some Great Power Above, and so he said, "Why should not I rest in that same love?" I know it seems impossible to us. When we are tread-

ing State Street the care of the Eternal is not anything like as apparent as it is when we are making our way through the meadow. When we are climbing the steps of our office and wondering what the day will bring, God's care does not seem anything like as near as it does when we are pushing our way through the pine covered hills. I know the difficulty, but yet we see one of the lessons that Jesus taught, and a lesson that some day, probably, we shall understand better. He said, "Be free from anxiety. Your Father loves you and cares for you."

The second freedom he taught was freedom from self-seeking. In that little village Jesus saw, probably, no rich men. There were no avaricious rich. And he saw no poverty that was urging. People were there whom we should call poor, but they had always enough, and if any there were in need because of circumstances, you know how it is in a village—there was always help. But now and then, perhaps, he saw some that were avaricious. For instance, he gives us a little picture of one man who raised such good crops and bought so advantageously that he even pulled down his barns and built greater, and you know how Jesus seemed to revolt against the very idea, and said one of the hardest things he ever said to any one. If he noticed in that little village life that there was self-seeking, that there were those who wanted the first and best places, there was always his dislike for anything of the kind. There was nothing to be gained from self-seeking, and he could not understand why anybody should

wish to amass riches. There was no need for it. If anybody was selfish and amassed riches, he hated it. He who gained the world lost his character.

And now you see why he taught "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven"—or the Kingdom of the Spirit. That is the first thing. Don't trouble about your own personal dignity, never mind that at all, it is not worth thinking about. Don't worry about the first things, don't want to be with the great. Live your life simply. Do the good you can, never mind the rest, it is not worth worrying about. You see, he taught us freedom from self. Every now and then when things happen that I think have not given me quite sufficient attention, I am irritated. So are you. Every now and then when we don't find our position acknowledged sufficiently, we are irritated. We have got that lesson to learn. Freedom from self, freedom from self-seeking. That is the second thing he taught.

Then he taught us, thirdly, the freedom from international jealousies. Forgive me for using these apparently trite words. Jesus knew nothing of international relationships, but he taught us the way out of them. He lived there in a little village, but he saw enough in men to understand why nationalities dislike one another. Judas took care of that. Judas took care that he knew about that, for Judas, you remember, was a great patriot, a great politician, and I am certain that time after time Judas would tell Jesus what he ought to do. There was the Roman official hated by Judas, there were the Greeks bringing in their teaching, hated by Judas. Judas, then,

I have no doubt, said life was worth living only when there was liberty. "Give me liberty," he would say, "or give me death." At the present time—I don't like to use almost slang—but at the present time we should say that Judas was one hundred per cent. Israelite. He lived for Israel and nothing else, and he took good care that Jesus should be told that he ought to also; and, apparently, Jesus took no notice of it at all. He never said a word about either Syrian, Greek, Roman, or even Hebrew, in a national sense. He simply left them on one side. They were not worthy of interest. When you have lived on the mountain and seen the distances, little things are not worth bothering about. There is an infinitely bigger thing than that I should be a perfectly patriotic American; there is a bigger thing than that. There is an infinitely bigger thing than that I should be a true Englishman. There is an infinitely bigger thing than that a Jew should be a good Jew. And Jesus saw it. Cleanse first the inside of the cup: be yourself, first, what you ought to be, and nationalities, then, will work out into their right way. Be a man, and you will be a patriot, you cannot help it; but you will be bigger than a patriot, also. And so, all through his life, Jesus simply left little international cares for those who had nothing more to worry about, and what he said was, "I want to be a man." A man in God's sight. And that was the strength of his teaching. He taught us freedom from international jealousies. I wonder if every Frenchman, to-day, in his church if he should be there, should say to himself, "I want to be a man first"; and if every German should say

the same thing, I wonder what the effect would be. We think over much of exteriors and too little of interiors, we dwell too much on objectives and are not subjective enough. Jesus was subjective in his teaching. And that was his third lesson.

And then the fourth lesson was that he taught us freedom from theological dogmas. I have already spoken on how impossible it was for him to be narrowed down: he could not be bound by what the schools taught. They simply stood for surface things. But when you are alone in great distances, why theologies seem oft ridiculous. It is surprising how little they seem. When you stand in solemn silence it seems absurd to talk about a plan of salvation that men have drawn up in thirteen hundred years, and to repeat musty phrases. I can understand men in a little four-wall classroom limiting God's ways, but I cannot understand anybody doing that on some, say, twelve thousand foot height. Jesus left altogether the little schemes that would enfold God, and tells just what he had come to feel. All he could say was, "There is a care somewhere that cares for my village. I call it Father—my Father." And when people told him of the old theologies, what he said would be, "I know it was said, I know the theologies have said this, but I say—and I have seen God on the hills—I say—" And he said some very simple things, but so wonderful that the world has not yet grasped what he meant. He freed us from the trammeling, bounding thoughts of little men and took us into the big distances of God.

Those are the four freedoms that I think Jesus gave to us.

But now I want to speak a word of warning. You know Milton's sonnet, when he said the Presbyterians of England said "liberty," but they meant "license." The liberty that Jesus brings is not license, and we need to remember that. When he wrenched apart the chains that would hold him, it was not that he wanted to be free from moral claims, and that is where we make our mistake. Especially is this true of the Liberal Church. He said, "I won't have your little creeds." Why? "Because I want to get near to God in my own way." He wanted liberty not to do as he liked, but liberty to get near to God. "I don't want to be worried," he said, "I want to live trustfully with God. I don't want to hate, I want to love God. I want all the narrowing things to go, so that I can get to God."

Friends of the Liberal Church, we are not liberal that we may do as we will, we are liberal because we want to get near to God. Is that so? Is that so? Sometimes I think it is not so. Sometimes I am inclined to feel that we want freedom so that we can just do as we like. Jesus never brought freedom for that purpose. He brought freedom so that we can get nearer to God and understand things better.

The engine on the rails is bound by the rails, the automobile is bound by good roads. The foot traveller can go where he wishes, but if he is the right kind of traveller, he goes where there are beauties: he goes where the

flowers grow, he goes where the rocks glow in the morning sunlight, he goes where the sands take on hues of sunset—he goes where he can see the things that satisfy his soul. And, friends, the true man says, “I am not going to be bound by the rails, I am not going to stick on the highway, I am not going simply to do what men tell me; I am going where I can see God.” That is why Jesus sought freedom, and unless we use it like that, it may be a curse. Freedom is not a blessing unless it be used like that.

I was on the borders of Mexico when that old-time Diaz ruled with a rod of iron—I was there when he was deposed and the Mexicans cried out that then they had found their freedom. Had they? The Czar of Russia was deposed. Russia found its freedom. Did it? Simply to have one power removed does not mean we are free.

We are free from dogma so that we can get nearer to God. We are free from creed, that we may have more unreserved communion. Unless we make our freedom an upward move, I would pray God give us bondage.

There is the problem of all liberal thinkers. Jesus brought us freedom, but he brought us freedom so that we may use it in communion. God grant that we may so use it.

Let us pray.

Help us, Father, so that we may use what liberty we enjoy with wisdom and with blessedness. As we are untrammelled may we seek all the more the graciousness that was with Jesus, and God grant to us that we may find it. Amen.

COMPULSION BEHIND JUDAS AND JESUS

Our Heavenly Father, help us now to spend an hour in Thy real presence.

Help us to inquire, feeling that the Spirit will answer. Help us to worship so that the hour may help us to be the men and women that we should like to be. Help us so that the hour may lift our lives on to a higher level, so that we may more truthfully walk with God. Sanctify each act of our service, so that no flitting thought and no unworthy motive may disturb the quiet worship of our souls. Amen.

In the chapter that I read in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter xxvii, there occur the following two sayings. Referring to Judas, the story in connection with him was that "He went away and hanged himself." Then referring to Jesus, the concluding words are, "They led him away and crucified him."

The two men are closing their lives. The last chapter of the lives of two individuals is being written. And it is being written very differently. With one it is a defeat in all respects. With the other it is a triumph at which the world ever since has wondered.

I have chosen the two closing periods of these lives because of that contrast, one representing the defeat, the other representing the victory, one representing a glorious climax, the other a terrible conclusion, a tragedy. They are not detached portions of life. There is no detached

portion in any life. No deed in any life is ever detached or ever isolated. What I shall do to-morrow does not solely depend on what opportunity to-morrow presents to me. It also depends on what I have been doing in my past life. I do not know what I shall do during the week, but what I shall do will be largely shaped by what I have done. All lives form one continuous chain, and so the tragedy that closed the life of Judas and the triumph that ended the life of Jesus are simply links in a chain which ran far backward.

Let us try to trace, for a moment, the links in those two chains. Judas was what we call a patriot. He was intensely Jewish. And we all know how the Jews are separate from others and consider themselves of a different life from others. Judas was a Jew of Jews. He loved his country. To him it represented everything. And he hated the people of all other countries, especially those who happened to rule in Judæa at that time. It was in the hands of the Romans and, as became a patriot, he hated the Romans with a tremendous hatred. Whatever he could do, he would do, to injure them and advance his own land. His whole dream was a free country, and whatever he could do to make it free, he would. By and by Jesus came into his life, and Jesus was held by some as the promised Messiah, which meant the promised one who should bring freedom. At once Judas was affected. Here was another Jewish leader. Then, as you know, Jesus disappointed him. The ideas of Jesus were different from the ideas of Judas, and at

last, instead of admiring him and expecting things from him, Judas hated him.

There is one tragedy in life that is ever present. One deed always leads to another. One act of love leads to another act of love. One act of hatred leads to another act of hatred. And so Judas ended by hating Jesus. And by betraying him—he hoped that by the betrayal he would serve the cause of his country. When we hate we sow the seeds that shall by and by spring up in the harvest of tragedy. Judas began by hating, he ended by hanging himself. The death is only the sequence to the hate. It is not a disconnected event.

With Jesus the story is different. As you know, when he was a young man he faced the choice that comes to all men. Should he live the life of the Spirit, or should he live the life of his compatriots? Should he fall down and worship the ways of the world, or secretly, sincerely and lovingly worship the ways of the Spirit? You have the record in the Temptation, and you know the choice that he made. Henceforth, for him, he would live the life of the Spirit at all costs. When he made that choice he sowed the seed which by and by ended in his death. For, if we will be true, if we are determined to be true to the highest, we are true till death. And when Jesus said, "I am the Son of God," he also said, I will be the Son of God at any cost, even unto death.

Thus the two endings of those two lives are each simply the climax of a life of thought. But individual lives are always items in collective lives. You and I are

in part the men and women our country has made us.

We are in part what our community and environment have made us. However we live, we are affected and shaped by our surroundings. And so Judas and Jesus were partly caused or, rather, shaped from their country's life.

Go back in Jewish history and you find, of course, as you know, that the Jews considered themselves the chosen people, and that very soon, when they settled in Palestine, they had, as it were, two codes of laws, one code that belonged to the Jew, and another that belonged to the stranger within their gates. The Jew was God's chosen instrument. The Gentile was something else. And, you remember, Jesus quoted one of the old customs when he said, "It has been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy." That was a Jewish custom for many centuries. And, as I have said, when you hate you sow the seeds of death, and so Judas was only a result of a long succession of centuries.

But, on the other hand, the Jews were also a nation which had, as is seen from their history, some of the finest seekers after God that the world has known. They were as we are. You and I are two men or two women. The Jews in their nation were two, as it were, a noble nation as well as a self-centred nation. Because of their nobility they could win the world. So you see the two streams of history, the two tendencies in Jewish history worked out to their destined end. One end was hatred, and we see it to-day. The other end was a Jesus, and we see his characteristics to-day.

This is so always in all history. There are two tendencies in life. There are two streams, or ends, one beginning with that which is low and ever moving on to that which is lower, one beginning with that which is noble and ever progressing toward the more noble. There has never been a time when these two tendencies have not been observable.

What does it mean? Men have always asked. Every race has seen these two tendencies, every people of every land has seen these two tendencies.

What does it mean? One is going upward toward the Holy City, one is going downward to the City of Destruction. We see it every day, two great movements of life, one of hatred and death, the other of love and life.

What does it mean?

The Persian said it means that there are two forces in life, one good, one bad. God inspires the upward movement, the Devil the lower tendency. The Jews took that teaching and adopted it, and I am not sure but that the majority of people in America have still some rather close alliance with that feature. They see evil, and they say it is the work of the Devil. They see good, and they say it is the work of God. Is it so? Is that the explanation?

Can we say with truth that Jesus triumphed through God, and that he was led to his death by the Evil One? I do not believe it. I believe according to the saying that I put on the bulletin: "The Same Force made Judas hang Himself and took Jesus to the Cross." The same force! Behind all life I can see only one Power—God.

But that Power works out his way by means of sequences. If we do evil, another evil proceeds. If we do good, another good follows. And those laws work out with God behind them. To me it is something as it is with a parent. A parent has a child. The child begins to choose not wisely. The parent urges greater wisdom. But the child goes on in its own way, and the parent can do nothing. All he can do is to wait until experience by and by brings in the necessary teaching. The youth must go as he will, into the far-off land, and the only thing to do is to wait until the bitter experience there works at his will.

I think it is like that with our Heavenly Father. He is behind every man. He stands by the side of all of us. But He leaves us the power to choose. If we like to choose the lower, well, we can do it; but by and by that lower will teach its lesson. And if we will not learn, it will teach at last by death and destruction. But God is behind us all the time, watching and yearning and hoping that we shall be wiser; but if we will not, we reap destruction. If we will, say, introduce cheap labor by the negroes of Africa, if we will do it, well, then, we must pay the price. It cannot be helped. It must be done. If we will institute the cheap labor of the European for the sake of the cheap labor, we must pay the price. On the other hand, if we will seek freedom and liberty and leave a land for the sake of liberty, as the Pilgrims did, well, then, the result will be the best stock America has and will have. Evil leads to evil, good leads to good, under exactly the same set of laws. If we will

be military in spirit, that life we can live, but the end will be death such as we have seen. If, however, we will follow good and love God, we shall produce men like Apostle Eliot and David Livingstone, or women like Mary Slessor. The whole works absolutely, irrevocably. If we like to choose the low, we can, and then the lower follows. If we like to choose the higher, we can—and then the higher ensues. And behind both is the same Power watching, waiting, yearning, loving. There is no other way. You have to learn by experience.

But there is this suggestion. If what I have said be absolutely the whole of the truth, you and I are simply straws in the stream of life. Our forefathers started the stream, and we are simply straws that must float. But what if, somehow—and I am not going to attempt to explain it—somehow there is what we call will power? I am not going to say freewill, and I am not going to say we have not that, because nobody is yet wise enough to make either of those statements. But we have a certain amount of power, and when we are floating down the stream, reaping where we have sown, there is some mystic power which will stop us, and we say, I realize, and will go back to my Father. While we are in the midst of all the pain of it, there is something in mankind that can say, I will go back home again, and I will confess my sins once more, and lean on my Father's bosom. In our evil tendencies we can have that will. We cannot change history, but we can make a distinct change in our life's story. We shall always bear the result of the past with us when we have been in the far-off

country, and even when we have gone home, after it, we carry with us the results. But with them a new will and a consecrated life.

Judas, if he had learned the love that Jesus had for mankind, would have dropped the hatred that he cherished and perhaps would have died the death of a martyr. You and I can change, to a great extent, if we will, our life story. We may, to-day, be making a mistake. We may be erring in many ways. And God help us, if we be, to use the will that He has given us! But whatever happens, I can only see behind it all a Power in our lives leading or allowing things to go downward or upward as we will, but yearning all the time for the upward movement.

“O Love that wilt not let me go.”

There is a Love that will not let us go. God help us to listen to it. God help us to lean on that Love, and to say, I give my life to Thee.

Let us pray.

Help us, our Father, so that in all the days of our life we may more and more be fain to will the good and to shun the evil. God help us when we are bound by our evil to renounce that evil and go back to goodness.

In all things help us to see Thy hand and to try to walk with Thee. Amen.

THE WAGES OF SIN

We are thankful, Heavenly Father, for these opportunities for quiet worship and for silent search after the things that belong to the higher life. May this day be thus a blessing to all the children of men. May mankind, the world over, during this day, seek the things which they know to be higher and learn better how to put aside the things that are known to be lower. Be wherever men are this day and be where every individual is casting the soul's eyes upwards.

Be with all who are meeting in the sanctuary, all who are meeting in the temple of any faith, all who are seeking the best things in common or in the home life, all who within, to-day, are feeling an upward call, all who are hearing in some way the "still, small voice," as the hours come and go. And be with any who may not be quite contented and satisfied, who may have good things that appeal to the body and so are careless of the good things that appeal to the soul. May such as are thus satisfied perhaps be rendered unsatisfied to-day. May there be something that perhaps shall disturb, some comparison which may perhaps disquiet. And, for a time, may we all look towards the heights and be unsatisfied with the life of the plain.

Be with all who are travelling, all who are seeking change and physical health. May the day be to them not simply a day of physical help, but also a suggestion that shall bear fruit in spiritual realms.

Be with all who are trying in any way to do good. And if there be any who are trying to do evil, may some one or some thing be able to restrain them.

Thus may the day, the world over, in every land, be a day when men seek to do good and to be good, and when

men for a time put aside the promptings to do evil and be evil.

May the day be God's day, and may we all recognize ourselves as God's men and women.

Be with all who shall pass the day in pain, or in suffering of any kind. May the pain and the suffering, somehow, be turned to benefit, and through the pain of the present may the spirit of the future be born.

May we all learn by what we suffer, so that eventually suffering, darkness, and disappointment alike shall be instruments that we use for gain.

Again we pray for ourselves. Help us, day by day, to find a good life, and as far as we can to keep our faith.

Help us, day by day, so that the whole of life is one ascent, so that each succeeding day we are better men and women than on the preceding, so that all along we gradually but surely climb and see further and further into God's great realm.

Be with those who are meeting, who have been meeting, in company, during the week. Despite differences of opinion, despite differences of ideals, may all who are longing for good things fight earnestly and live nobly, and so by the goodness of life make appear small the littleness of mere policies.

May we all our life be really better than our theology and nobler than our expectations of life. Amen.

In the words that I read from St. Paul in his Letter to the Romans, chapter vi, verse 23, there occurs that well-known saying, "The wages that sin pays are death," or, as we more commonly quote it, "The wages of sin are death."

I want to speak of that saying this morning, but, first of all, I want us to agree on a definition of what sin is, if we can so agree. All theological terms, unfortunately, need explanation. That is why I so rarely use a theo-

logical term if I can help it. Whatever word we use, such, say, as "grace," what do we mean by it; or "repentance," what do we mean by it; or especially that word that is so often quoted, "divine," what do we mean by it? Every time we use a theological term there is a question subconsciously asked, what do we mean by it? Our old professor in college said, "Never use a word, if you can help it, that needs definition, always use simple Anglo-Saxon that folk can understand." If we would do that, I believe nine-tenths of our theological discussions would fall to the ground. We quarrel over the word, and we probably give to that word very, very differing definitions.

Now, what do we mean by "sin"? The best definition I have ever seen is in a book written by a literary man, not by a theologian. I do not know whether any of you know the book, "The Religion of a Literary Man," by Richard Le Gallienne. It is the best description, generally speaking, of religion that ever I read, simple, direct, and free altogether from debatable words. And in amongst the rest of the description that he gives of religion is the definition of sin. I will read you that definition. "Generally stated, I would define sin as that which, in any time, or country, or under whatsoever conditions or outward appearances, means the living by the lower instead of the higher side of our natures. We cannot tell what that higher side ultimately signifies, any more than we can tell what that lower signifies. We only know that one is higher and one is lower, and that it is the evident intention of Nature that we should live according to the higher."

In all my reading I have never met a definition that I think quite satisfied me as well as that does. Sin is that which under various conditions or differing conditions is the living by the lower—is the living by the lower instead of the higher nature. Of course, the lower and the higher will constantly vary. I mean, what is higher one day will be lower again another day. You climb one peak because it looks so high from the valley. When you have climbed it you see another mountain higher and you climb that, and the first height then is low. It all depends where we are as to what is high and what is low. And it is so in conduct. What is high to-day may be low to-morrow. What is the higher life this year may be the lower life next year. And Le Gallienne says sin is the living at any time by the lower in place of the higher, and, as he says, we all do mean—we cannot explain it, but we all do mean—that there is a higher and that there is a lower. We know it instinctively. And we sin when we live by that which we know—or instinctively feel—to be low.

I wonder if you agree with me in that definition. If so, we will change the words of the text and say, “The wages of living by the lower are death.” The wage that the lower pays is death. Now, let us take that rendering of the words and see how true this is, first, in what we might call general physical life.

Apparently, as far as we know, life progresses from the simplest forms to the more complex. Apparently, somewhere and at some time, life began in a very low form, in a simple cell. Perhaps, as far as the vegetable

kingdom goes, in that lichen which creeps over the rock's face to-day. Life began in a simple form and it then commenced, as I have said, to come to grow toward more complex forms, and has been changing thus for nobody knows how long, at any rate, into the millions of years; and, apparently, the climax, so far, of the progress is a soul. The beginning was a cell, the end, as far as we can see it, is a soul. Between the two, of course, there are innumerable progressions.

All the changes mean, of course, movements, and to every movement there is a reaction. Apparently, all the way through life, for every change, against every change, there has been opposition. It is always so. The pioneer says, "Let's go out West." The home-lover says, "No, let's stay at home." Everywhere there are two movements. One says, "Let's go." The other says, "No, let's stay," and there is always a conflict between the two.

The conflict comes from very obvious reasons. If we move, we go into uncertain life. We don't know what is going to happen. At home, we do know fairly well what is likely to happen. If we move, we are sure about incurring difficulty. If we stay, well, there will be less of difficulty. If we move, there is nothing sure. If we stay, there is some assuredness. If we move, all the joys are in contemplation. If we stay, we experience what joys we know. And so, all through life there are these two sides, one an upward urge, an onward call, the other, desire for rest, for certainty, for physical enjoyment.

I often wonder how it is we all got life under conditions of the same order.

There has always been a westward move. There have always been spirits who have said, "Go West," and there have always been those who said, "No, stay East." All through life we have these two opposing conditions. St. Paul speaks of it in his own body, in the place that I read: "What I would, and what I would not, are ever present with me."

If we stay, strange to say, we die. If we are stationary, strange to say, we lose power. If we choose, as it were, a lower, we become atrophied. All through the upward march of life we find forms that have passed out of existence, forms that stayed low, that could not adapt themselves to an onward life, and so passed out. Every time we read of differing strata we find forms of life that have gone. They stayed lower, they died. The wage that the lower pays is death.

Let us now pass on to the workings of this "low" in things spiritual. I always feel a little doubtful—I don't know how you feel about it—when I read scientists and find that they say that man is the final climax of physical changes. Fiske says so. I see that Thomson says so, in later days—that the human being is the climax, the ultimate end, of physical development. I feel like doubting that, somehow. It may be that there will be sometime a higher physical form than ours. I do not think we know enough to make it a statement. But, however that may be, it does seem pretty sure that with the development of mankind there came a change in the up-

ward movement, and that the change instead of being further physical became largely what we may call spiritual, a development made in another sphere, this time in the inner life, the heart sphere, the soul sphere, the same development in that sphere that had taken place in the physical. Day by day, in the soul sphere, there are calls to move, shall I say, "West"? There are calls to occupy new ground. And I am not sure that we are responding.

I wonder, to-day, if in the soul's sphere we have developed, say, from the days when Mohammed was at his height. I wonder if the soul of the true Mohammedan, who conquered Southern Europe, who taught us so many things in those days—I wonder if you and I, in our soul, have gone any higher than he was. I wonder when I think of Greeks at their best, when I read Plato, I wonder if you and I have gone ahead of him in our soul life. I wonder if, as the centuries come and go, if we are growing along that line as man has grown along the physical line from lower forms. And, sometimes, in my despondency, I doubt it. I sometimes doubt whether the man, say, who walks the streets of Boston is any better than the man who, in old days, pondered and thought about God, on the sides of the Himalayas. I mean, in soul life. I wonder, sometimes, if the man who lives, I don't care whether in Newton or the South End, whether that man is any better, say, than the man who trod the streets of old Babylon—in his soul life. I am not concerned with physical development here, I mean in the inner life, of the soul, in the touch that one has with his God, and in

the response that one makes to the upward call, the "still, small voice."

Are we growing that way? And yet I am certain of this, that Sin is living by the lower, and if you and I are living by the lower levels of the soul, then there is only one end, for what we do not use dies. That is invariably true. If you and I do not use our soul life as we should, it will pass. You see evidences of this every day. The man who lives in the slum so loses appreciation of nature that he cannot appreciate anything that is beautiful. Take the man from the slum and put him on the slope of a lonely mountain and, however beautiful the landscape, he will be miserable. He loses a certain sense. Take a man who lives purely for wealth-making and put him in a museum or picture gallery and he might as well be in a jail. He has lost unconsciously the sense of appreciation. Let a man who has forgotten music, or become careless of it, let him go to a concert and he will be glad when the end of the concert comes. He has lost a certain sense.

What we do not use we lose, and this is just as true as regards our touch with God. If you and I forget God, by and by we are absolutely unconscious of His presence.

How is it in our lives? Are you better to-day than you were last June? Do you see and hear the Divine where you did not see it then? Do you hear the "still, small voice" to-day when you didn't hear it twelve months ago?

Is the average American quickened much more spiritually inside than the average Oriental?

When I ask myself that I dare not answer. I dare not give a reply.

Am I more conscious of my Master to-day than I was ten years ago when I left England? I shrink from the reply. Are you to-day, say, when you are forty, fifty, or sixty, a better and a truer soul than you were when you were twenty or thirty? And I dare say you shrink from the answer. And yet if we are content with the lower, the higher will pass altogether out of our life, and we shall simply be a human being, physically, but not spiritually.

Will you think over this? Will you watch this side of your life? Will you guard this side of your nature? Every day should see a change, and an old Christian should be a saint. A person who has attended this church from childhood to manhood or womanhood ought to be a saint. I am not saying that harshly, but the higher is always calling, God's voice is always inviting, and we sin when we refuse the invitation upwards.

I remember, down in El Paso, one of the old natives and I went to see something on Mt. Franklin. He said, "I have never seen that before," and he had lived there forty years. I am afraid we live without God and often do not see and do not hear and therefore do not obey. The wages of living by the lower are death. I want you to have life, Life Eternal, and I pray that for you all every year may find you advancing in spiritual insight,

growing in spiritual grace, and becoming, by and by, so beautiful that men know you live with God.

May you and I listen to the higher, for if we listen to the lower, the Wages of Sin are Death. Amen.

Let us pray.

Be with us, Father, and help us to seek Thee constantly. Help us to turn often aside. Day by day, help us to make the habit of turning out from the noise into the quiet, out of the excitement to the calm. Day by day, may we close our ears to the voices around, and hear the Spirit's voice. Amen.

THE CRITICS OF THE BIBLE

Our Heavenly Father, we seek that the unuttered words of prayer may be answered of Thy goodness. We seek that the silent prayers of each heart shall be answered by the Heavenly Fullness.

We come together with one purpose, but from very differing histories. Some of us come from business that oft is disquieting and distracting; some of us come from anxieties that, do as we will, hang like the thunder shower threateningly above us. Some of us come from failures from lack of success in doing that which we should like to do. Some of us come in physical weakness and in anxiety that arises therefrom. Some of us come carrying a burden of perhaps unwisdom, perhaps the unwisdom of others that forms a load for ourselves. Some of us come from homes that are passing through differing and difficult stages. And we bring in common the cry of the human heart after Divine guidance and perfection. Grant that in some way—in some way that perhaps we cannot describe in words, grant that in some way our yearnings may find satisfaction and our loads may find a co-bearer. May we hear the words of Jesus translated into the words of the Eternal, "Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." May the peace of God, which we cannot explain, enter subtly into each life, and so may we go back walking as though we were more erect, with eyes more glistening and with hopes more firmly placed. May we go back to live again the life that we know true men and women desire to live.

And as this Divine help comes to us we pray that it may come likewise to our friends who are not with us in worship. Be with those of our number who are kept from us by weakness, those who are away from us by reason of infirmity and age. May the homes of which we thus think

for a time be fragrant with the incense of the Holy Presence. And be with all who are worshipping, so that the blessings that we seek may be found of them, for we know that all are seeking through whatsoever paths they are walking and whatsoever thoughts they are entertaining.

Be with all this day in every sanctuary and Holy place. And be very near to those who are unconscious of any search, for sometimes we so far forget our heritage that we are content in little places, satisfied with small accomplishments, and happy with purely sensual happiness. Be with such to-day, and may there be some alluring thought, some enticing invitation, some message that shall make, perhaps, unwilling feet commence to climb the hills of God.

Let the Divine blessing rest on all men and women everywhere, on all nations, on all races, and in all climes, and for one day may there be one family seeking one Father, and finding one Divine satisfaction.

Be with us during the days on which we have entered, be with the Church here guiding and directing and inspiring, and may we all, day by day, grow in graciousness and in the knowledge of our Heavenly Father. Amen.

The subject on which I am speaking to-day is one selected for me, The Critics of the Bible. It is not, perhaps, just the kind of subject that I, myself, would choose for Sunday morning. I somehow prefer, as I think you do, something more helpful to our deeper life, but I will try my best to make this helpful on those lines.

The Bible has always been a subject of criticism, and of that we make no complaint. The more criticism of the Bible the better. We welcome *all* criticism.

There are two schools of critics, one, perhaps now decreasing, which seeks criticism in order to destroy; another school, which criticises in order to emend and amend. It is as though a man had, say, a political op-

ponent and he determined to kill that opponent by some way or other, and made harsh criticism thereof with the intention of destroying. Some critics, perhaps, take that stand. Then, again, perhaps, we have a friend that we see falling into error and with a timely criticism we seek to save him from his faults. That is a second type of criticism of the Bible. Some criticise to destroy, some to amend. The first kind we term destructive criticism. This had its birth largely from the view that was prevailing at the time as regards the Bible. You remember when the Reformation took place there was deep down in men a determination to be free from the outside government of the Church, men were determined to throw off the bonds of the outside Church, and they said very largely men could find their own life and that men were justified by their believing, by their faith, but yet they felt, all the way through, that men needed some outside guidance. They could not however quite trust men to themselves, and so, instead of the Church, gradually there came the Bible. They said, "If men are justified by believing, what should they believe? The Bible will tell all that is necessary." And so the Bible took the place of the Church. But, as you know, the Bible is not perfect. The old friends said that it was—that every sentence was exact, that every statement was accurate, that everything in it was of Divine inspiration, and that it was an infallible standard and guide for conduct. Now, men who read soon saw that those statements could not be substantiated. It is not infallible, because it contradicts itself; and if you are infallible, you cannot contra-

dict yourself. There cannot be two infallible contraries that are both equally true. And then the Bible does things—it makes God do things that we would not do, sometimes God is pictured as saying things that we would not say. And so men said, “This must be killed,” and there arose a contest of destructive criticism. But as regards practically all of them I think we can say that they have our sympathy. The fault was not with the critics but with the standard that they criticised. The wrong view of the Bible gave birth to the criticism which followed.

Now let me pass on to constructive criticism. Here we have a different view of the Bible. Instead of it being regarded as an infallible standard, as an unmistakable guide, we regard the Bible as a record, as an actual accretion, a gradual building up of customs and faiths and ways. As such it is at places high in tone, in other places low in tone. As an accretion, it necessarily, many a time, shows contradiction. No growing man is consistent. Every man who is growing is obliged to be inconsistent, and the Bible is inconsistent, but it is because of its growth. How is it and why is it that in one place it assumes something that I do not agree with, and that in another place it contradicts this assumption? Why is it that there are differing customs which contradict each other? What is the meaning of it all? And so scholars have said, “We will find out as far as humans can find out, we will understand what it all means.” And all we can say of the critics is good. I cannot understand any sensible person ever grumbling at a criticism of the Bible.

By all means, let us learn all we can, by all means, let us find every explanation we can; and if at times we have to change our opinions—well, a man who never changes is not worth anything. Every wise man changes his opinions. I should not like to think that I think to-day just as I did when I was twenty, and I hope I shall not think when I am seventy just as I think now. Every wise person changes. And so after criticism if we change our opinion of the Bible, all the better.

Now, there are two schools of critics, divided according to the work on which they particularize.

First, there are what we call the lower critics. These deal altogether with the language in the Bible. They take the language in which it is written and try to find out exactly the meaning of each word. I remember for a week in college we spent the whole of the lectures on two conjunctions, “if” and “and.” We did nothing else during the whole week. It was not very exciting, and I dare say that some of us allowed our thoughts to wander, like yours, many a time, when folks are preaching; many a time, our thoughts are a hundred miles away from the minister’s. But it is work like that that grips every little point, and it is those little points that by and by shine out and make us understand the meaning of the language of the olden days. And then, again, critics try to find out what was the language used; I mean, what were the words. You understand why that was necessary. We have no manuscript of the Bible older than the fourth century A. D., and, say, twelve hundred years after some of the work was written. The oldest Bible

we have is about the fourth century. We have about ninety-seven old ones, really old. And the old ones were all written in capital letters. There is no spacing between the words, there is no spacing between the sentences or chapters. Now, you can understand it is difficult to read them, even for a scholar. When you put a row of capitals across the page, even in English, you cannot read at first glance. You can go over and divide the words. There are ninety-seven old ones like that. And then there are nearly two thousand a little younger, written in script, the ordinary running hand, the long running hand. These do not naturally quite agree. You will understand why they do not. They are all written by hand. One man copied from another. Now, when you are writing, you know directly how easy it is to make a mistake, quite unintentionally you make a slip, perhaps omit a word, or perhaps put another word in; or perhaps you are writing from dictation and you do not quite accurately catch what was said, and you write again the wrong word. When these copyings go on day after day, day after day, you will understand that many a time the sentences, or, at least, the words, are changed, and what scholars tried to do was to find what was the original. The older the manuscript, of course, the more authority it has. Then, again, there is a temptation when you are writing to purposely alter now and then. You come across something that you don't quite understand, and you are copying, and you hesitate: "Now, what does that mean?" Let me give you one example in the very first chapter of Deuteronomy. There occur these words, "These are

the laws which Moses wrote—on this side.” The Revised Version says “beyond.” “On this side,” “beyond.” You see the difference. What is the reason? They mean absolutely the opposite. Here comes in the work of the critics. You know the old belief that Moses wrote Deuteronomy, and you know perfectly well the old belief that Moses never crossed the Jordan. Therefore, if he wrote Deuteronomy, he only could write it on the side on which he was. Naturally, he did. Moses was “on this side.” If Moses wrote it, the lines would be on the side on which he was—“this side.” But if somebody else wrote it later, who was across the river, he would say, would he not, “These are the words which Moses wrote”—he never crossed the river—“beyond.” If a man on this side was writing, it would be “Moses wrote beyond.” If Moses wrote, he wrote “on this side”; he would not write anywhere else. Now you see the position of a man who is transcribing an old manuscript. If he comes to a word which is undoubtedly “beyond,” undoubtedly that—the scribe says, “That is wrong, that is wrong. Moses could not write ‘beyond,’ because he never was beyond; that must be a mistake, I will change it, I will put it ‘on this side.’ ” And that was done. That has only been found out because of the lower critics. And that is only one example of many. The lower critics say, “Let us get it right according to the original text, as far as we can,” and, of course, that is wise. That is why we have the Authorized and the Revised Versions. The revisers find many more manuscripts, we are always finding them, they are to be found continually in old libraries in the

East, and they are examined and changed, in many cases. Is there anything to be afraid of? I should like to appeal to our Orthodox friends, is there anything to be afraid of? Is it not just the right thing to do, to try to get at the actual language that was used in those far-off days? So much, then, for the lower critics.

Then, there is another type of criticism, called higher criticism. This does not trouble so much with the words, the language. But they ask, When was this book written, who wrote it, why was it written? And the scholars set themselves to answer these questions.

We all know that the chapter headings are not reliable, they were placed in there much later. We never take any notice of them to-day. And so the questions arise, Why, When, Where, Who wrote this book? And to find out, several methods are adopted, and all of them, I assure you, would improve it. The first method is to look at the language. I do not mean the distinctive use of the words, but the language as a whole, and you can learn a great deal from that. For instance, if anybody brought to me now, to-day, say two dialects, two dialect books, one written in Yorkshire and another written in Sussex, I could tell before I read six lines which came from Yorkshire, because of the different words that were used. And that is exactly one of the criterions. Scholars know their Greek and their Hebrew well enough to know when they read it that it comes from a certain district and it was presumably written, therefore, in that district. Nobody else could read a book of Yorkshire stories except a Yorkshireman. If I read a line of Yorkshire dialect, I am

bound to say no one of you could follow me. A scholar finds just the same as regards Greek and Hebrew. He knows where to place each. And then, again, he judges by style. We all have our style of speaking and writing. Most of them differ. I know the first time I saw a shorthand report of one of my sermons I said, "Do I speak like that?" We all have our style. In *Punch* there has been a series of little short stories imitating the great authors. Directly you began to read, you knew whom the man was imitating. You could not confuse Marie Corelli and John Ruskin. And it is so in the Old Testament. Scholars can tell, when two men are writing side by side. One man says, for instance, when he speaks of his God, Elohim, another Jahweh: two men, two different styles of writing. And that runs right through. A critic can tell pretty well when any man wrote. If you take your oldest manuscript, scholars say there is very, very ample evidence that two men, at any rate, have been writing in that manuscript. Then, in addition to the style and, as I have said, to the words used, you can tell very largely by the words when each was written. For instance, if you read a letter that spoke about the telephone, you would know that that letter was not written seventy years ago, because there was no telephone. And if you read a letter from somebody else or to somebody, mentioning the aeroplane, you would know very well the era when it was written. According to the words used you have a guide to the time when written. And if a book says, for instance, as when the Old Testament book says, "There was no king in those days," you would know

very well that the man who wrote that did it when there were kings. The very sentence indicates the time. And then when a man writes about something that naturally happened say 120 B. C., you say immediately that this book was not written before that time. You can very largely fix the time by the type of words and by the historical references that are mentioned.

This goes right through all the higher critic's work. Of course, as new discoveries are made, new theories have to be adopted. I cannot see why, then, our most Orthodox friends object to the work of the higher critics. It is simply unraveling a mystery, it is simply unbaring a treasure, and it is adjusting theories to the sources in which they arose.

Now, what happens? Of course, at first, when anyone begins to criticise, he begins negatively. That is the first step always. If you are going to have a new building, your first step is to pull down the old one and put the new one in its place. Unfortunately, so many are terrified when you begin to be negative, when you begin to say, "This is not so." But, surely, if we are wise, we shall say, "If it be not so,"—and then go on to constructive criticism which follows. And this leads me to express my heartfelt thanks for the work the critics have done. Why, the Bible is different altogether today from what it was even, say, a hundred years ago. It means so much more. Have you never—I am sure you have—in Sunday school had your teacher say something like this, "Well, you know, of course, that is—that is not—" and then the teacher stops; he does not know quite

what to say; he does not like to apologize about certain things. When the text runs, "God says so and so," the teacher has not known quite what to say. Nowadays we know what to say. We say, "That is a story written so and so; at the time, people believed so and so, and it was right then, but since that time we have changed; that story was right when it was written, it is wrong to-day. It was a half-god, and the whole gods have come since then." We make no apology now. We explain according to the knowledge that we have gained. And so the Bible fits in, right in, say from 800 down to 120 or 50, and with its fitting in with the times we have pictures of the times.

Let me show you very briefly the uses to which our Bible is put. First of all, the historian looks at it and wonders why certain customs arose, and the Bible is one of the helps to tell him. When he is wondering about human sacrifice, he reads his Homer and understands what the Greek says. Then he reads the old story of Abraham and Isaac and understands that in those days human sacrifice was right; but by and by it is wrong, and no longer is it practised. And so with many customs. The old method of worshipping anywhere on a hilltop—we find that in the early days of the Hebrews, in the early days of all Eastern people, people so worshipped, and then we find gradually the custom of going to one centre such as Jerusalem. We find the stories progressing right through the Old Testament.

And so right along the Bible is one of the guides to what has been the custom of life and one of the guides

to thinking about life. I don't know whether you ever read that very attractive book on the "Five Great Dramas of History." Job heads the list, Homer follows, Faust follows, Dante follows. In Job, we have what men were thinking, how they tried to solve the problems of life. Then, as regards nationalities, we have numberless helps. We have our main thought as regards the ideal, too. It is beautifully attractive in Micah, beautifully attractive in Jonah, the old stories. You see, the Bible begins to be something living. It is the story of living, of a nation, it is a story of men and women's active thinking. It is not a standard that says, "There it is, don't touch it." It is a living book, and when I want to understand a thing I turn to it as toward a living book and as a living voice that guides me.

Then, again, the anthropologist, who wants to understand men's inner customs, turns to it along with the rest, and it guides him.

But, most of all, we have gained by it as a book of devotion. All the other objects that I have mentioned are great, they are all absolutely necessary, but we want something else. We want an aid when we are trying to be better men and women. We want a help when we are tossed by the storms. We want a strong arm when we seem about to be dashed on the rocks. We want more than what barely human help can be. We want something else, and we find that something else infinitely better in the Bible when we understand it. I see the nations making their huge piles, and I can turn to the old prophets and hear them preach against national greed;

I see men set themselves up to be demagogues and to show false ideals to the people, and I turn to Isaiah where he pictures his very high ideal, and I say, "That is the man that shall lead eventually to the Holy City." And I am storm-tossed in my thoughts of the Father, I am not so certain of the Divine Providence as I should like to be, and I go on one side and sit with Jesus. Once—once, I could not have used it like that, for I should have been all the time thinking that Isaiah meant simply Jesus, when he talked about the ideal life. Now I know that he means every one—that the ideal life is like that. And when once I read of Jesus, I should have said, "Yes, that is all right for Jesus, all right for him, but he was different from us, he was born differently from us, he was divine." I don't say now he was not divine, I say he was just like us. There he was, a young, raw fellow, fighting life just as we are; and so he is an example to me, and I read his beautiful pictures.

I have been wondering where I should put the climax of the Bible, in this respect. Where should you place it as regards devotional help? Perhaps, I should say that in the Old Testament, that unknown Hebrew poet reached the highest point when he sat down one day and wrote, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow, I will fear no evil." Perhaps that is the climax of the Old Testament poetry. And the climax of the New, perhaps, apart from Jesus, was when Paul wrote, "The greatest of these is love," that wonderful, sublime little chapter.

But you see, now that men believe in the Bible, we can choose. I can feel what helps me, and choose it. The critics have been working, and I thank God for it; and I hope they will continue to do so. Sometimes they may destroy something that I thought was good. I cannot help it, because eventually there springs up something else that will be more helpful and more inspiring. Do not tremble—I am surprised at folks trembling over truth. Do not tremble about truth. It stands, and it always will stand. There is one thing that never fails, that is truth; only I pray that God may make me faithful to it, may I when I see it recognize it, and when I recognize it may I give my life to it. May the Bible be more and more to me as the days come and go, may it be more and more to you as you read and learn.

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, we thank Thee for the revelation of Thyself, we thank Thee for every whisper that tells the truth. Help us to listen to those tones, and help us to be obedient to the Heavenly Message. Amen.

THWARTED AMBITION

Let us join together in silent prayer.

Eternal Father, Holy Spirit, we gather to-day from differing homes, bringing differing life stories; from differing ambitions and purposes, from varied experiences, trials, and temptations we bring our life's record and we lay it before the Spirit and speak silently of our wishes. Some of us crave for strength, some for comfort, some for guidance under perplexity, some for inspiration under disappointment, and some for forgiveness for forgetfulness.

Grant, Father, to each separate life the real touch of the Spirit, so that as we bow we may feel Thy strength entering into us. As we worship, may we feel the loads that we have carried being dropped or lightened. And so may our lives become wrapped around in Thy brightness. May the words that we have heard sung be re-echoed in every life. May we find peace, may we find salvation, and may we all recognize how beautiful are the feet of the Spirit which are bringing such blessings.

May thus this hour of worship be an hour of rebirth, of rededication, of reconsecration to Thyself.

And as this Divine blessing we seek for ourselves, we also seek it for all men and women. May every Sanctuary be holy ground. May every minister be sanctified of the Spirit. May all who lead in song feel that their voices are hallowed instruments of the Almighty. May every Church, every Cathedral, every holy Grove, every Synagogue, every Mosque, every place where men assemble, be this day the gateway of Heaven. And may many visions delight the souls of men, and may men, as a result of imagination, say to themselves, "Lo, this, Thy Sanctuary, is holy ground."

Thus may the day shape the whole of the thoughts and

purposes of men. May a hallowed peace take the place of disquiet, and may a holy purpose take the place of selfishness.

May the nations, through the individual, find themselves, this day, seeking more earnestly the gifts of the Spirit. Be with all rulers. May it be, this day, that they bow their heads before the Eternal Ruler. Be with all governors. May they, this day, be clothed with humility; and in earnestness seek guidance, so that they may guide; seek goodness, so that they may help others to be good.

For one day, may all mankind forget noise, turmoil, unworthy ambitions and unworthy gains. For one day, may the disquiet of life be forgotten and may there be the peace of God, during which peace may the still, small voice be heard.

Be with all who are sick, this day. Be with all who are away from home in sickness. May the day be one, if it be well, whence strength both of body and of mind be found.

Be with all who are travelling, wheresoever they may be. May they realize that in our Father's House are many mansions, and wherever we may be we are in one of His rooms. May God be revealed to them through the sights they see and the experiences through which they pass. Be with all persons. May, some way, the grandeur of goodness supplant the temporary gain of evil. Be with all who write for the press, or influence opinion in any way. So that every soul to-day, for a time, may be in God's Sanctuary, and every son of God touch the hand of the Father. May the young see visions, may the old dream dreams, and may all approach nearer than ever before the gates of the Holy City. Amen.

As you noticed, I read for the Scripture Lesson the account of David's inability to build the Temple, and the call of the son to attempt that work.

We have in this chapter a little interesting side view of the value of Biblical Criticism. We all know that in the earlier Books of the Bible very often we read that the

Hebrews thought that God intended wholesale slaughter. We hear—or we read—where they taught that they were commanded to kill every man, woman, and child in Palestine. And you remember the story how Saul was commanded to kill and how he was degraded because he failed to be obedient to that command. Now we find in this chapter a contradiction to all those stories. The very qualities which the earlier Books imposed upon the heroes—those very qualities are here held in such thought and such esteem that they are a disqualification. Here we find a contradiction of all the old spirit. Instead of a Saul who is told to kill we have a David who is disqualified from building because he has killed. Instead of being told to slaughter all the inhabitants of Judah, here we have a punishment because a man has slaughtered. There is a different spirit altogether. The earlier commands were written probably five, six, and seven centuries B. C. The Book of Chronicles is a review of the old history, a review written or made about 300 B. C., a review probably made by the priests, a review that for many years was left out of the Canon altogether, because the old Hebrews said, “What is the good of it, we have it all somewhere else, why put in a repetition of history?” And, as you remember, the Book was torn in two. Second Chronicles was put in the old Canon, First Chronicles was left out. And it is rather interesting—the closing words of the last chapter of Chronicles and the opening words of the first chapter of Ezra are alike. The reason being that this revision of history was torn in two, for Ezra used to be part of Chronicles;

and the old Hebrew Bible ends in the middle of a sentence because of that. If you could read Hebrew, and should pick up the old Hebrew Bible, you would find the last words of the last chapter like the declaration of Ezra. "Let him go up." It stops there. The old Hebrew Bible ends in the middle of a sentence, because of that tearing of the old manuscript in two.

Here we have the old manuscript written about 300, three hundred years later than the older ones which contain the commands to slaughter. During that three hundred years there has been a progress, there has been a change of opinion, just as we are different from those who came over in the Mayflower, just as they were different from those who lived in England, in, say, 1200 or 1300. The centuries bring a change of thought. Here we find just the things that were once ordered condemned. The priests in 300 had a new ideal of life, different from the writers who wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and so on. The old writers said, "kill." The new writers said, "Well, if you do, you will somehow stain your hands." You see how things progress. We change, we grow.

This morning, I want to take that change of opinion and speak of it as an example of what happens in life very often.

David—of course, we do not have his real history, we have only his idealized history—David was apparently a typically successful warrior, a man with many attractive qualities and with many failings. His life was successful. And then, as with all the great warriors, when he settled down, after his days of warfare he determined to

build. Great warriors in the past generally tried in the end to be great builders. When you travel about in Rome you see on all sides monuments of the great warriors. They first did their fighting and then they tried to commemorate their lives by architecture. And so David determined, after this fighting, to settle down and build, and to build especially a great Temple. Again, a very common ambition—to build a great Temple; that would not only speak of God and through God, but also honor those who built it. And the priests, with their new ideas of life, said, “No, to build a Temple requires a man of purity, a man of clean hands.” And so David somehow felt that he could not be the builder, and his desire to make a great Temple had to lapse. What he longed for he could not have, what he desired to do, he could not accomplish. There was in his life, at the end, a thwarted ambition.

And I want to ask you to think over, to-day, how in our lives we have that same experience, how we all encounter thwarted ambitions.

And these come from two reasons, as far as I can see, from two great causes. One set of causes is from outside of us. I suppose the older ones who are here rather like to listen to young men talking. Young men always begin by telling of what they are going to do. And they generally speak very emphatically. “We will do so and so.” And that is the attraction of youth. That is where they beat us older folks. They will do it. And then by and by the years come, and when they get, say, over forty, they begin to say, “We will do it, if—pro-

vided—" When they get over fifty or sixty, they say, "Well, we will do it—if we can." Haven't you noticed that? The difference between, say, thirty, forty, and fifty? At twenty or thirty we are going to do; at forty we will if—at fifty we will—provided—if we can. Our life narrows down. We recognize that there are certain things that are possible—certain things that are improbable. This, of course, comes from, again, a various set of circumstances with which we recognize later that we are confronted. Our birth has a good deal to do with what we will do, our environment has a good deal to do with it, our opportunities have a good deal to do with it. Our circumstances have a good deal to do with us. Our what we might call chances have a good deal to do with us. I remember, when we were in college, one year the young students would find places directly; there happened to be many churches. Another year the students would not find churches, because there happened to be none vacant. The causes were quite outside of the students, depending on circumstances. And so we say our life depends very largely on our circumstances, our chances, our environment, our birth, our physical health. There are numberless things around us that shape what we are able to do. And by and by they so control, that things that we would do, we cannot. The house, or Temple, that we would build is an impossibility.

Is it not so with us all? It may be that a few of us do what we intended to do, but I dare say there are not three people in this Church this morning who have ac-

complished all they set out to do. If I had accomplished all I wished to do when I was young, there would not be an empty pew in the Church this morning. I dreamed of filling every church I entered. It has not come to pass. And I suppose there are not three people in the Church this morning who have built the house that they designed to build. Outside circumstances have shaped a good deal of their lives.

Then there are other circumstances which are inward. We do, of course, in part as we are able to do, and we are able to do as we create in part our ability. The young man enters the university. He does not spend as much time as he might in study. He gets through the first year, he perhaps gets through the second year, but by and by he begins to feel that he has not the knowledge and the ability of some of his companions, and by and by there comes a time when it is recognized that he is second to many. He has brought it on himself. It is so all through. We create our abilities, we make our characters. And then when the ability is created and the character formed, then comes the judgment: we are not able to do what we intended to do.

This is true in spiritual things just as much as in temporal things. Every habit, every thought, every purpose shapes our lives. Everything we do has an effect, and when our inner life has formed, our outer life then gives the final judgment: I am not able—I cannot do what I wanted to do, or I am not clean enough in heart, I am not pure enough to see God. I cannot build as I hoped to build, because I have misshaped my life.

Is not that so? There comes a time with us all when from outward and inward reasons ambitions are killed.

But now I want to speak—and this is really why I have taken the subject; I want to speak about the test.

When these impossibilities become known, when you and I have a thwarted ambition, what then? How do we take it? When we find that we cannot do what we should like to do, what then? When we find that our dreams are impossibilities? When we find that the canvas we would paint we are not able so to paint? When we find that what we want to accomplish we cannot, what then? Then comes the test of life. Then we stand at the dividing of the two roads. Then either we become a failure or we become a success.

When I find that my life is narrow, confined, limited, what then? When I cannot find the best, and have to be content with the second-best? When I cannot be first and find that I can only, perhaps, be the fifth or sixth, what then? When I find others far ahead of me and I know that I cannot reach them, what then? When I find that I cannot build God's House, what then?

Then comes the test. There are two ways open to us. One way is that we become dispirited, we become sour, we become cynical. We say we haven't got our deserts, that So and So has got far more than his deserts, that life is not fair, that competition is not a good guide, that the best men often are the failures apparently, and that the men who seem to get on are not worthy of it. We begin to be cynical, we begin to judge, and we con-

demn the world all around, and we go into ourselves, and give up any real life.

How many of us do that? How many are doing it to-day, in Boston? You talk to them, and they will tell you immediately, "Oh, life is all right, but you know it is not fair, it is not just, men are not what they seem to be, the best are passed by, the second-best are chosen; the real books are not read, the ephemeral books are the popular ones." And so the judgment goes. It may be true. But a man that becomes sour and cynical is done for.

I cannot find all I wish, I cannot do all I should like, but what I *can* do I will do. What I *can* accomplish I will accomplish. If I have to be content with the second-best, I will do my part in that second-best. If I cannot be a leading minister of a church, I will be a minister of a secondary church. If I cannot be foreman, I will be a workman. If I cannot be chief, I will be a follower.

I wonder sometimes—I think that we in America, being such a young country, are forgetting this quality. We don't like the patient, steady plodding, we don't like the quiet going-on, we don't like the days that are gray, and that simple record, that grim determination. We like to do things in a rush. We like spectacular movements. We like noise, we like combinations and figures. And, friends, they all mean nothing. Most of us are only second-best, and our work is to go on quietly. What tells in the end is dogged, unseen persistence. What tells in church life and in all life is quietly continuing our unseen tasks.

Of course, it may be that we are a young country, and that we are in the stage of the young man who says, "I will do it." But we shall find that all that counts is what is done quietly, that nobody ever sees. And what counts in character is not what is spectacular, but what is steady, hidden and secret. You and I—some of us, have got beyond the stage of ready confidence. We have learned what we cannot do. Some of us will reach it by and by. In whichever stage we happen to be, the only thing to do is to say, "I will go quietly on, if nobody sees, it doesn't matter, if nobody praises, it doesn't matter. I will quietly, persistently, steadily do my work, and if I do not succeed in the world's eye, I will succeed in my own by being faithful and true." And such work never fails. No man who plods steadily and faithfully on fails in the end.

I want now to turn to the story again. David, apparently, failed, but he had prepared so that his son could do the work. There is not any one of us who will see America as we should like to see it. None of us will see the Holy City. None of us will ever gain the world we should like to have. But we can prepare others. I sometimes, as you often, no doubt, do, try to think of what Jesus felt like in the last few days of his life. I wonder if ever a man lived who did less. I wonder if ever a man lived who seemed to fail so completely. When he reached the end, what had he done? Suppose we try to measure up the accomplishments of Jesus, what can we see? What had he done? He had not built a

Church, he had not formed a community, he had not gathered any forces. He had not a single work to show for his three years of public ministry—if what we are told be true. I do not know any character in history that seemed to have done so little. You cannot tell me a single spectacular thing that he had done. If ever a man could have said, “I have failed,” if ever a leader could say, “I am no use, my years have been lost,” that man is Jesus. He certainly had not built the house that he intended. But—but, there was in four or five men a dream. Four or five humble and impetuous fishermen had somehow a disquieting dream. They went back to fish, but they could not continue fishing because of that dream. Apparently all that Jesus had done was to put that dream in four or five fishermen and one or two women. He built there and nowhere else. And then that dream brought the men back to Palestine and to service. Jesus failed outwardly, he succeeded inwardly marvellously, and I think somehow that that is what you and I have to do. We may fail lamentably outwardly. I don’t suppose any one of you is quite the character you intended to be. I suppose you all feel, when you are really in earnest with yourself, that you have failed, but what we have got to do is so to live, so to serve, that we create, at least in our children, or at least in those who notice us, a dream. If I have left in my children a dream of goodness and duty, if you have left in your children an ideal of duty and of goodness, you have given something that by and by will shape the world.

There is no failure for goodness, there is no failure for the quiet dream. We may not do what we intend, but others will. It is a slow march. It is a slow way.

I have been reading during the week copies of Utopias that I could find. I have been reading the old literature where I could find it, from 1500 to 1600 and 1700, and I have been astonished to find how in that old literature we have just the things that we are saying to-day.

I heard, the other day, one of our leading lawyers speak on our present system of prisons, and it was like a new dream. Yesterday, I took up the "Vicar of Wakefield," written as you know, in the seventeenth century, and I read of the old Vicar who was there in prison for debt. I read what he said about the prison, and he said, nearly two hundred and fifty years ago, just what the lawyer was saying to-day. We have not advanced, apparently, very greatly above what Oliver Goldsmith said as regards prisons, two hundred and fifty years ago. It is slow work, but there is some progress. The prisons to-day are not quite what they were in Goldsmith's time. We have gone forward. The prisons to-day are not quite what they were, say, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; they are better, though they are not to-day as we would have them.

We may fail, and a voice may say, as it said to David, "Thou shalt not build," but our sons will build, if we give them the ideal.

God help us when we find we are only second-rate to be second-rate splendidly, and to have such a spiritual touch with God that all who follow are closer to the Al-

mighty. I do not mind if I do fail, if I inspire a few good thoughts that by and by will bring forth fruit. Never mind if you do fail, if you have said and done some things that by and by will bring forth their harvest. What matter if I do not sing the song, if I inspire others to sing it? What matter if I cannot carve the statue, if I make others able so to do? What matter if I cannot paint a beautiful picture, if I make others see the beautiful? What matter if I sin, if in my repentance I make others hate sin a little more?

We do not fail, if we do our duty. God help us so to do.

Let us join in prayer.

Help us, Father, to take up life's task, to do it faithfully, to do it in the unseen.

Help us, day by day, to be as we know we should be in God's sight. Amen.

EVIL, SUFFERING, THE TRUE CON- CEPTION OF SALVATION

Eternal Light, be Thou our light this morning. Eternal Wisdom, may we learn of Thy ways to-day. Great Father, may our souls feel Thy touch. Great Leader, may we be led of Thee.

So often are we perplexed, so often do we stand and peer into the future, wonderingly, hesitatingly. So little do we know. Be with us.

And may we to-day learn fresh lessons of God and feel a new touch with the Father. May we see to-day new visions. May we understand better to-day what life means and what our perplexities and difficulties mean. Listen to each one in the silent prayers that are arising. Since men have begun to think and pray they have thought and prayed much as we are doing to-day, humbly seeking and earnestly desiring the best things.

May we all be led of God. May the human means be but instruments that lead to God and by the help of which God may be better understood.

Be in each life, and be in each home represented here. Listen to the prayers of all who bring their home cares and worries, listen to all who bring their business anxieties, and may one and all alike breathe the air of the Heights, see the visions of the Heights, and go back home strengthened and re-inspired.

In every sanctuary may weary ones find rest, may seeking ones find help, may sinning ones find guidance. May every sanctuary to-day be truly the meeting place of the Divine and Holy.

Be with all who are assembling to-day for any form of thought or work. Be with all who are not thinking of the better things. Let Thy presence somehow be made known

to those who are satisfied, to those who are contented, to those who living in the valley have never thought of climbing the hills. Be with them this day, and may there, perhaps, come a whisper of discontent and dissatisfaction.

Be with the rulers of the nations, this day. May they be guided by Thy inspiration. May they be willing to be guided by Thy Spirit. And for one day may they feel that it matters not what material gain be theirs if the spiritual gain be not theirs also.

Be with all people. Be with those who are travelling—those far from home and probably casting thoughts homeward now.

May mankind everywhere place the human hand in the Great Divine hand, and so may earth and Heaven be linked with the golden bonds of prayer. And when night comes may we lie down to sleep conscious that we are being blessed by the Father, and ready to meet afresh the demands that are ever made upon us. Amen.

My subject this morning is Sin, Suffering, and Salvation; as you will recognize, a very difficult subject on which to try to speak.

I sometimes see in imagination a number of old warriors gathered around a campfire. They have passed through a day of strenuous fighting and glorious victory, and when night has come they are gathered around the fire, in a great forest. The pines around are dark with just the tips lit with the glow of the fire. The warriors sit and watch the blaze and the sparks, and then, by and by, begin to talk over their problems. They have known unfaithfulness, treachery, and suffering, and they begin to talk one with the other as to why there is this treachery, why some men are foul and dishonest and cowardly, and why it is that so often mankind is made to suffer. By

and by one tells an old legend in which he tries to explain the problem. He says that away back in the old days there was a beautiful grove, and in this grove some wondrous fruit amongst which were apples to eat which meant there would be no sickness and no pain. A woman watched these apples. Then he goes on to tell them how she was, one day, enticed out of the grove and could not watch them, and that when she returned from her absence sickness and age had begun to creep on, and sorrows were known. You all know that old Norse legend of Idun and the Apples. It is a childish story, but it is tragic. No one knows when it was composed, but it never would have seen the light had men not known what we call sin and suffering. Similar legends, we know, arose with the Greeks. You all know the story of Pandora and her curiosity. Then you all know the story of the Persian Ahriman, the God of Evil, and Ormuzd, the God of the Good, fighting it out. You all know the story of Genesis. Again the story of an apple. I imagine all the old legends were simply talked of around the campfires; and I know they were all men who talked it over, because in every case they put the blame on a woman: if she had been present, they would have said less about her.

All these old legends are tragic although amusing; and they show that the world over men have had this problem to fight. I read you how Habakkuk, one of the early preachers of Israel, felt the same problem and cried out, "How long?" And, to-day, I want to try to give what

we say in regard to the problem guided by our somewhat enlarged knowledge.

First, the problem of Sin. In our time, life is very different from that of the older thinkers. Most older thinkers place the Golden Age in the past. We place it in the future. In all the legends the Golden Age was in the past, and by some mere chance man had fallen from it. With our beliefs concerning growth we say the Golden Age is in the future, that the past was darker even than the present or, at least, more simple. We are moving on, we say, to a fuller life, a life we often compare to the climbing of a mountain. We start at the foothill. We climb the first height, and then we see ahead of us a deep cañon and we begin to go down. Then we come across an unscalable precipice and we go down, and after hours of toil we are no higher than when we started, but we are nearer the goal. And life is like that. Men started out, they have climbed at times and added to their height, soon they have to go down into a cañon. Then there are all around difficulties, and after long labor the climbers are no higher than when they started, at least, in perpendicular feet, but they are nearer their goal: they are so much nearer the summit.

Life is like that. Some days we make an ascent and some days a descent. During some eras men climb in belief, and then in following eras they have to descend into the valley ahead, and they look back and find that they are no further from the depth than they were at the beginning. But this climbing, and this jour-

neying means, of course, a leaving behind. There is no going forward without a leaving behind. The pioneer sees new sites, but he has to leave old sites behind. He finds a new position, but he has to give up an old one in order to gain it.

In all this there is a suggestion as to the meaning of sin. We are climbing higher and every step upwards means a relinquishment of something below and we don't like the giving up. Nobody likes to give up. We like to gain the heights, but, somehow, we are reluctant to leave the depths. Every new attainment means an older sacrifice. And so when a new plan is made in life the old plan is felt at the same time. When a new virtue is presented to our view an old virtue puts in its word. And have you ever noticed that practically all—I will say practically all—our sins were not once sinful? Probably most of our sins were once virtues. At any rate, the suggestion that made the new virtue is the same suggestion that made the old sin. Take selfishness, one of the worst vices of to-day. It was once necessary. The savage had to look after himself, or else he would have died. Take murder or robbery. At one time the savage had to kill, or else he would have been killed. Take sensuous desires. At one time men had to increase by almost any means, or else the tribe would have been wiped out. Our sins of to-day were probably once virtues. But when we see a higher plane, the old-time necessity is outgrown. A man to-day who is selfish is altogether different from the man who was selfish ages ago. The man who is

selfish to-day we call sinful. He has not risen with the rising tide of movement.

Our sins are our choice of what we once loved and at the same time a refusal to gain a higher plane. A sin is loving the lower when we see a higher; a clinging to the imperfect when we see a more perfect.

But now let me very briefly speak of the effect of sin. I have heard, many a time, old-time preachers speak wondrously eloquently of the power of sinfulness. I think that our new view may seem more frightful still. If the old theologian could make his hearer tremble at the thought of sin, I think the present-day scientist could do it even more effectually. Every time we choose a lower, or every time we refuse a higher, we have made a choice, or a refusal, that mars not only our life but every life with which we come in contact. Every time I refuse to climb upwards I necessarily go downwards. Every time I refuse to reach the heights I necessarily tie myself down to the depths, and by and by I lose the power to climb, and am—simply less than human. And with my loss comes the loss of all around me. No man “liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” If it were not so, I think we could sometimes say something for sin. I think sometimes we might be tempted to say, “Well, shan’t I do what I like with mine own? It is my own body, shan’t I use it as I like? It is my own life, shan’t I use it as I like?” But we can’t say that, because others suffer with us. If I am degraded, my friends suffer. If I make an evil choice, my companions suffer. If the peoples of the

land choose the lower, the land dies. Every time the lower is preferred the soul—shall we say it—dies. The soul that sinneth, that is, the soul that loves the lower, that soul shall die. If only one could paint this picture so dark that the real significance of sin could be seen; but we cannot do so, for sin is past description in its fearfulness.

Now I want to speak of suffering. I speak with hesitation of suffering, because when we are undergoing suffering and pain it almost seems callous to speak about it. But let us, for a time, put that hesitation on one side and think somewhat of the meaning and the source of suffering. In the first place, much of suffering—no one can say how much, but much of suffering comes from sin. Bearing in mind my past statement, if we choose the lower, we choose that which by and by infers suffering. The moment we make a choice of the lower, at that moment the clouds begin to gather around the horizon and by and by the storm breaks in all its fury. If we could cancel the amount of suffering that has been caused directly and indirectly by sinning and sinful choice, the world would smile much more brightly to-day than it does. We all know that much of our suffering is caused by our preference of the lower when we see the higher.

And then, again, suffering comes from the decay of the material. The spirit, we take it, is eternal. The clothing of the spirit is simply material and is final. For a time, I take it, our spirit makes a lodgment in our body. That body of necessity decays and by and by passes. Let me take a single picture from our own Church here. This

is the fifth building erected. Each building preceding it either proved too small or was destroyed. But the spirit continues, and is here, and so, I take it, in the eternal spirit we enter into differing bodies. The body passes, and whilst it is passing it must of necessity fade. Of course, as the days come and go, those who seek to learn find how to alleviate the suffering. But always will there be the suffering.

And then suffering comes from the effect of circumstances outside of our control, such as by accident, or by curious chance, shall we say, of circumstances. And all we can do, it seems, is to face the suffering. All we can do is to put a brave face to it.

But there comes the deeper question that I have heard asked many a time, "Why are we so created? Why is it?" Nobody knows. All I know is this, that whilst we are as we are, suffering is not a curse. Or, whilst we are as we are, suffering helps as much as it injures, if not more. I have read—and you have read, probably, a little book by Coulson Kernahan entitled "A Man of No Sorrows," and I am not anxious to see a world without sorrows. If I had the power of some magician to send away suffering, I would not do it. I am not sure it would be well. Created as we are the grander phases of our character come by our suffering and our failures. Created as we are the best part of life has come because we have had to fight this suffering and this sorrowing.

Now let me pass on to salvation. Not in the future. I am not going to speak about it in the future. The old conception was that salvation was being saved when this

life had ended. I am not concerned with that phase of it at all.

I believe that there is a Great Power behind. I believe that that power is as a father, and that he will meet us as a father would. And I leave Him like that. I am not concerned any further. I can honestly say I am never troubled about what is going to happen to me when my spirit and my body separate. I leave it with the Father. I know I do not lead the life I should like to lead, but I leave it. He knows why I have failed. He knows the cause of my failure. He knows what I have done that I have tried to do nobly. I leave it with Him. I am not concerned with salvation at the close of life. But I am concerned with salvation now. That is, salvation from something. I do want to try to be saved from something now.

First, I want to be saved as much as possible from sinning, that is, from making evil the deeper choice. I am concerned in being saved from foolish mistakes. I am concerned in not being a failure day by day. And to that end, I try to commune with the best that I know. To that end, I try to imitate the best I know. And to that end, I try in my prayer, to be close to my Father. I try all I can to be saved from folly, mistakes, and vice. That is one of my phases of salvation.

Then, as regards suffering and sorrow, I do not seek it, I do not want it. Nobody does. None of us want our difficulties. But I do not seek to be saved from them, for I want, by and by, to have a character that is noble and true. I want, by and by, to be the man of which I

dream, and I know from experience that I shall be helped to that end by sorrowing and suffering and pain. It is not easy to say, and it is not easy to anticipate, but, at the same time, I am not going to ask to be saved from suffering. I should like to be, but whether it would be well or not is a different matter.

Such, then, in my idea is salvation. It is to save from sinning, it is being saved now.

Now I pass to the last phase of suffering and that is being saved from being overcome by suffering. It may be that we suffer so much that we lose out. Men have been lost, as it were, through the difficulties that they have had to face. I want to avoid that. I want to avoid being overcome by my difficulties. I want, rather, when they come, to be brave and strong enough to fight them and to use them in such a way that I rise all the time. So I will say I want to be saved from sinning and I want to be saved from defeat in the face of suffering. Then, as I have said, if that happens, if, by and by, I come to make few foolish choices, if, by and by, I love the heights and hate the depths, and if, by and by, I am brave enough to meet any difficulty with a smiling face and with an upright mien, then, when the end comes—well, I will fall asleep and leave the rest with the Unknown. As Tennyson says, “I hope to see my Pilot face to face,” and whither the voyage will take me I do not know and I do not mind very much.

God help you when you are face to face with the choice between the lower and the higher. If you love the lower, you sin.

God help you when you are face to face with suffering.
May you meet it, and all through be brave.

And God help you day by day so that at the last you
can say without any fear and without any immodesty, "I
have fought a good fight, I have kept my faith."

Let us pray.

"A charge to keep I have,
A never dying soul to save."

Help me, my Father, to be true to my charge, and so
to live that this soul shall ever grow in the beauty and gra-
ciousness of holiness.

Help us all day by day. Amen.

THE PROBLEM OF DIVINE JUSTICE

Our Father, we are thankful for this returned Sabbath, we are thankful for this season when we can have new thoughts, when standing in new positions we gain new views of life, when quietly on one side we may make new measurements and plan new purposes.

Be with us all, as we thus solemnly and quietly seek Thee. Be with us as we are anxious to find more of the Divine ways and the Divine meaning in life. May our worship help us, and may we be altogether greater men and women, wiser, stronger, and purer because of joint communion with Thyself.

Speak, Lord, and we, Thy servants, will try to listen and to understand. Amen.

In the Second Letter to the Corinthians, chapter v, verse 10, there occur these words, which I am reading from the Twentieth Century New Testament: "For at the bar of the Christ we must all be made to appear in our true characters, that each may receive the consequences of the life he has lived in the body, in accordance with his actions, whether good or worthless."—"At the bar of the Christ we must all be made to appear—"

Throughout literature, as long as literature has been in existence, we find questions concerning Divine Justice. We find writers in all ages asking if there be such a thing, for men have always had a longing for what you might call abstract justice. The foundation of all justice to-

ward mankind is a recognition of the distinction between right and wrong and an underlying faith that right must finally prevail. If we lost that faith, life would simply be chaos. There has always been a search for this triumph of Divine Justice. We find it away back in Homer. He declares through one of his characters, "If Agamemnon die, the doer of the deed must suffer." The writer of that poem, whoever it was, felt that if a hero die by murder, life demands that the doer of the deed should suffer.

Euripides, later, constantly expresses the same feeling and in the "Trojan Women" we find ever hanging over the evil doer an impending punishment, but somehow the punishment does not fall, and so Hecuba makes a prayer to Zeus: "To thee I pray, if on me vengeance fall, all mortal things by justice thou dost guide." We might almost repeat those words to-day, "All things by justice thou dost guide."

Then, a little later, we find Plato saying exactly the same thing. In his "Republic" he has a picture of a court of arrest, a Court of Life, as you might call it; and into that Court souls absolutely naked come, so that the Judge has no idea who, or what, the soul had been. And there, in absolute nakedness, the souls stand to receive the reward or the punishment that is due to them.

Later, the Greeks stage the same picture, and the Book of Revelation with its eternal imagery is very largely built on the pictures. Evidently, the writer of that Book of Revelation knew Plato and knew much of that old Greek imagery.

All the time, Egypt was writing in the same way. Men felt in those old days that somewhere and somehow justice must be done.

Later, the Christians took the same idea, and I suppose you all know that wonderful hymn, terrible, forbidding, but still sublime. I mean that "Dies Irae." Let me quote one or two verses just to recall those other verses to your memory.

"Day of wrath! O day of mourning!
See fulfilled the prophets' warning!
Heaven and earth in ashes burning.

Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth,
Through earth's sepulchres it ringeth,
All before the throne it bringeth.

Death is struck, and nature quaking,
All creation is awaking,
To its Judge an answer making.

When the Judge His seat attaineth,
And each hidden deed arraigneth,
Nothing unavenged remaineth."

And so on and on. The hymn is awful in its picture; terrible, but sublime.

To those friends who are speaking to-day of the Second Coming, there is exactly the same feeling. Those who believe in the Second Coming believe, behind it all, in an abstract justice, and it seems as though justice were not, and so, they say, Jesus will come and bring it.

All through history, all through life, behind all civilization, there is this feeling that somewhere there is a

Divine Court of Justice, else life is a hopeless enigma.

Let me pass on now to what we feel about this to-day. As I have said, the past has never been without these thoughts of justice, and the present is but as the past. And there is this particular thought behind it all—that our life here, our thoughts of justice, are ever becoming more noble. We are ever seeing, as it were, better thoughts of justice and trying to put them into action. Think, to-day, how different it is in many respects from the old days. I remember the time in my short life when the first person in our neighborhood in Yorkshire, who attempted co-operative ownership, was boycotted and made to pass through the criminal court. To-day, we are feeling that it is only right that those who work should have somehow some voice in the management of the labor that they give. We do not know yet quite how to put this feeling into real activity, but there is that feeling everywhere. Our idea of justice is somehow increasing as regards conditions of labor.

Then, again, a writer said the other day—and the words quite struck me, “If Jesus had to be here to-day and had to give that picture which he gave of the paying of the wages”—you remember the picture in which he paid those who worked all day a sum, and those who worked an hour the same sum, and when, in the parable, the justice of the thing was attacked, Jesus is made to say, he makes the householder to say, “Shall I not do what I like with mine own?”—the writer says, “If Jesus had to come back to-day, he would not say that,” for, to-day, we say we have no right to do what we like with

our own. The right is limited, and we have, with our own, to consider how we touch on others. You see the ideal of justice is enlarged. The same with the soldier, old people, and needy ones, we more and more feel that they have to have greater and greater care.

And one writer puts it, "When we think of good men and what they should do, when we think of Jesus and what he would have done, we turn around and say, 'By all that God requires of me I know what God himself must be.' " We feel within a yearning for justice, we feel within a desire that things should be fair and right. And so says the old prophet—that every desire within tells me what God is like, and that He has inspired that longing for justice and, therefore, man must be just.

But I think, in one respect, we are probably thinking less, to-day, of the imagery of the future than ever. We are thinking more and more, it seems to me, on this line. The "me," or whatever it is—the soul—is shaped by its actions, and when that "me" passes on it will be what it has shaped itself to be. I think that is how we are thinking, more than, say, on the lines of that old "Dies Irae." We feel that, day by day, we mould our soul, and that when the end of this pilgrimage has come that soul will move forward moulded as we have moulded it, and to the life that it is fitted to live. Probably that is the line on which our thought of Divine Justice will move. We sow, and we reap as we sow. We build, and we have what we have builded. We mould, and we have what is moulded. Ourselves, our soul, goes on as we have shaped it.

But I want now especially to speak of one side of Divine Justice that somehow seems always to have been overlooked. We need, it seems to me, not to emphasize material reward, nor the immediate payment of spiritual merit. If we do good, material payment is not the destined nor the right award. We remember all through the Old Testament that material and spiritual things are mixed, and it is always felt that if a man were good he should be rewarded, and if Job were good he had no right to have Job's sorrow.

Should goodness be rewarded by material things? If it should, I am afraid that goodness will only be prudence, and will become wisdom rather than morality. Plato instanced the same thing, but that is the only instance I know in which there is a very clear line drawn between the type of life that the spirit should lead and the material rewards. If I do good, have I a right to expect to be paid for it; is that justice? If I am noble, should I expect success? If I live the best life I know, have I a right to the reward—to expect that I shall be happy? Do the two things hang together?

You remember when Wolfe was going up the stream before the Heights of Abraham it is said that he quoted—recited Gray's "Elegy," and said that he would rather be the author of that poem than the conqueror of Quebec. He became the conqueror of Quebec, he gained a soldier's reward. The author of Gray's "Elegy" gained a poet's reward. Absolute justice. The soldier received the soldier's reward, the poet received the poet's award.

Now is it not the same in people, all through life?

The spiritual man receives the spiritual award. The man of the world receives the worldly award. The shrewd man benefits by his shrewdness. The business man benefits by his business acuteness. But the good man, how does he benefit? Are we right when we say that goodness should be rewarded materially?

It seems to me that justice is done, if a man who is unselfish by his unselfishness becomes still more unselfish; that a man who is a spiritual seer, by exercising that quality becomes a still greater seer, for spirituality gains greater spirituality. That seems to me to be fair and right and just.

"J. B.," the English writer—I don't know whether you know him or not, but very few men have ever written so clearly on spiritual topics; "J. B." says in one of his sketches that there are three divisions in every event. There is what we think before the event happens; that is, how we look forward. There is what we do when the event is happening, when we are right in the midst of activity. And there is what we think of when it is over. And he says, if we have had a night of noise and thoughtless jollity, when we look back on it we have one set of thoughts. But if we have done a noble deed and look back on it, we have another set of thoughts. "And when it is over," said he, "is the best guide to what our deeds have been. When we are true and look back, we are proud of it; when we have been false and look back, we are ashamed of it." There is justice.

And isn't it so with all life? When I have been false I gain as my reward a debased soul, when I have been

true I gain as my reward a soul satisfaction. And I cannot help but think that we need to move more and more on those lines. When thinking of justice, think on those lines.

If I choose to follow the Master, I do it because it is right to do it, because my soul tells me to do it, and not with any thought of what comes to me. If pain come, that is nothing to do with it. If want come, that is nothing to do with it. If dislike, that is nothing to do with it. I choose what I think is the noble path, no matter what be the reward. I have the reward, and nobody can take it from me—because I have chosen the best.

You remember Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Friends, our rewards in the true life are not of the type of this world. Milton received for his "Paradise Lost" less money than probably nine-tenths of you will have coming into your home this next week. Supposing Milton had turned around and said, "There is no God, there is no justice, I have got only so many dollars for writing 'Paradise Lost.'" Instead, Milton had the satisfaction that he had led thousands of souls nearer to truth. And that was his award.

Jesus, when he had shown the grandest pictures of Divine life that the world has seen, when he had taught a few of his followers more inspiringly than any other teacher—when he had done that, and given his best, was dragged out of the Garden of Gethsemane, in the midst of a mob, without uttering a single word. Supposing Jesus had turned around and said, "There is no

such thing as justice!" He had his reward, and he has his reward to-day. Take the grandest figure in history, and we do not compare that figure with Jesus. He had his reward and it was in the same type in which he paid his life. He gave his life to show his Father's love, and he found that love; hence he got what he sought.

I want to impress that on you more and more. If you wish to serve, serve—and you will gain your reward, but it won't be material. If you wish to be a Christian, live a Christian life, but you won't be rewarded by things you can touch and handle; they are on a different level. If you wish to see into the heights of God, look into the heights—but you won't gain the lower by so doing. If you wish to talk with God, live with God, but men will not thank you for it; popular thanks are on a different level.

We gain what we seek, we get what we long for. If I have given my life to serve, my reward is the serving, and I must be thankful for it and be contented with it. If you have given your life to serve mankind, in medicine, or in social service, or literature, your reward will be of the same kind. You will be doing good, and that, to me, is all that is needed. As we sow, we reap.

But, of course, friends, when all is said and done, the award of the spiritual is infinitely greater than the reward of the material. Can you compare anything, can you parallel anything, with the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding? Do you know anything equal to it? If I could give you, to-day, that peace, I should

give you the grandest thing in life. And that is the reward of the spiritual.

Somehow—I may be wrong, but somehow I cannot help but feel that there is a Divine Justice when we look at life rightly. If we seek the spiritual, we find it; and we do not gain the other. If we wish for the other, we can have it; but we do not find the spiritual.

Divine Justice, to me, is that what we yearn for we find; that as we seek, so we discover. And I would, friends, for I know of what I am speaking, I would that you should seek the best—the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, give unto us the wisdom to seek for the best things. May we seek first, the Kingdom of the Spirit. And possessing inward blessings, thus may we be calm and strong whatever outer things come to us. Amen.

THE INFALLIBILITIES OF LIFE

Grant, Eternal Spirit, that on this day, that noisy, rushing world busy with its own affairs and anxious ever for its daily gains, may listen to the higher voices and to the nobler ways of life. Grant that for a day men and women may leave the low-lying valleys and make a few steps upward towards the heights. May every city, self-absorbed and ambitious, for to-day in part forget itself, and over its busy streets may there be a whisper of peace and of eternal love. And may the villages, this day, as they hear the sound of bells also hear the invitations of God in their hearts. And so throughout the length and breadth of this land may men and women see into the heights and hear their Father's voice.

And may every land be a land blessed.

Be with the countries across the water, distracted and disturbed and anxious as they are. May it be that to-day they learn, "What shall it matter if ye gain the whole world and lose your souls?"

To-day may the world take secondary position and so may the spiritual take the first place.

Be with all who are travelling to-day. Be with all who are in sickness and pain. Be with all who are in prisons and in our hospitals.

Somehow, over the world may there be a different life to-day. May men breathe a different atmosphere. May there be somehow a prophecy of the time for which we hope, when the whole world shall be one great family.

And we pray for ourselves. We all have our separate lives, our separate problems, and our separate sins. May our morning's worship help us so that our problems may be less distracting, so that our disappointments in life

may be less keen, so that our ambitions may be more noble, and so that our imperfections may gradually become less.

May our worship help us and may we go back to our homes feeling glad in our hearts that we have met together to worship and to seek. Amen.

I want to ask you, this morning, to think over what there is infallible in life. Is there—or are there such things as infallibilities? We all know that life is a fight. In one of Hamlin Garland's books there is a very pathetic picture of a private returning from the War in the South. He is pictured as slowly and painfully going back to his little farm. He is full of disease and weak and ill. And at last he reaches his little home. And Garland said, "His fight with the South is over, but his fight with life is only re-commencing." We all stand in somewhat that position. Men have always felt it. And there are two sets of antagonists. Some of the fight is against foes or opponents that we know and that we know how to measure up and how to face. And some of the fight is against something that is intangible. We cannot quite tell what it is, and we cannot measure it up. Men have always felt this. Wherever you read history, ancient or modern, east or west, you find men fighting against this intangible something and trying to get some help from somewhere. Men have always been longing for and seeking some infallible help that shall stand at their side in this fight. Greek, Roman, Hebrew, Egyptian, Asiatic, Savage, Christian, all alike, have had their ways of seeking this something that they think ought to exist,

that shall be for them a perfect help in this unforeseen fight.

I want, mainly, only to speak of the Christian way of seeking help. The Roman Catholic priest in Manchester, with whom I was very friendly, used to be often saying to me, "Hanson, you know there are two things necessary, one is an all-powerful God and the other is an infallible representative of Him." Of course, if we could unite those two, I suppose it would be all that were necessary, but we have never found them yet. We presuppose, we are obliged to take for granted some power behind. We cannot think of life without it. What about an infallible explanation of that power, an explanation that is absolutely infallible and absolutely worthy? We have never found it yet. And it may be pessimistic, but I feel like saying that we never shall, either.

There have been three claimants, however. There have been three claimants for this infallible position. The first claimant—and I am speaking of the Christian world, the first claimant has been the Church. If you read Church history right from the time of the Disciples, you find very gradually but very surely the power of the Church directed to Rome. It was only natural, too. Rome was the capital city. It was the head of the Government practically, and it was natural that the little Church in Rome should also claim precedence. It claimed it and got it slowly and gradually. Then slowly and gradually it extended its power in Rome itself, and then when the Empire fell and the imperial power decayed in Rome the Church took its place. In the Mid-

dle Ages the greatest power in the world was undoubtedly the Church. Kings and emperors trembled before it. You remember the great monarch, Henry IV of Germany, who came to interview Hildebrand the Pope, who kept him waiting out in the cold until it was his pleasure to see him. And every nation was fearful of being placed under an interdict. Undoubtedly, in the Middle Ages the only power in the world was the Church. And it claimed to be the representative of God, the infallible representative of God, and if it had been, it almost looks as though all would have been well. But you also know your history—that the Church began to prove itself very far from infallible. It is one of the tragedies of life that I cannot explain, and I suppose you cannot, that we are always trying to form strong institutions and strong countries and directly we get them they begin to decay. I wonder if you could tell me of a single institution that has grown strong and has not then come to decay. The Church grew strong and then it began to go. You know the awful history of the Church, corrupt, sinful, purely materialistic. And by and by men said, “This, at any rate is not infallible, at any rate, the Church does not represent the best, at any rate, the Church does not represent God. And the first infallibility failed.

Now comes the second. When half of Europe left the Church—I mean the Roman Catholic Church—they still felt, as men have always felt, there must be something yet infallible, we must have something to guide us in our lives. And they took then a second guide, this time the Bible. The reformers said, “The Bible is absolutely the

word of God, every single letter in it has been penned by His fingers, every saying in it is absolutely faultless. When we read it, it will save us. It is infallible." That was the second claim that was made. And I do not know any picture more beautiful and at the same time more pathetic than to see, as I have often seen, an old man nearly at the end of his life's journey, with a candle for a light, with steel-rimmed spectacles to aid his failing eyes, sitting there night after night stumblingly reading the Holy Book. It is one of the most beautiful pictures the world shows us. And so one almost feels sorry in that respect that the Bible is not what it was claimed to be. Very soon after the Reformation a new story began to be told about the Bible. Men began to say that it was a collection, that it was a compilation, and that, with all other human things, it had its errors. And I remember, even in my short life, the great shock that was felt when the older folks learned that there were mistakes in the Bible. Now we know it. It is no longer used to clinch arguments, a text is no longer a completely refuted argument. Now, the Bible is a story, a history, with its mistakes and its beauties, with its errors and its truths. It is like a path over the hills, at times dreary, but at times entrancingly beautiful. But it is not infallible. And so the second infallibility has gone.

Then there came the third of which I speak with a good deal of hesitation. People said, and say yet, "It is all right for scholars to trouble with the Old Testament; do as you like about that, find out all you can about that—the Old Testament, but do be very careful about the

New.” And then they went on to say further, “If you really must, you can dissect the Epistles and the writings like the Apostles’ writings, but leave the Gospels alone, because they hold the story of Jesus.” Now, a great many hold to the position to-day, but, alas, that is not the final position. You are obliged to learn all you can about the Gospels just as much as you are about Genesis, and then when you begin to learn about the Gospels you begin to be shocked, and you begin to wonder about the position of Jesus. Undoubtedly, as you know, the Gospels were written from memory and in the form we have them at least seventy years after Jesus, and one of them was undoubtedly written very much later still—undoubtedly they are colored by the men who wrote them. They cannot help it. If I wrote a story, and if you wrote a story, about the same occurrence, they would be very different. You would write your style, I should write my own style. And so in the Gospels. They are in the style of Mark, the style of Matthew, the style of Luke. And then going further, there are some sayings that we are not sure about. Let me quote one or two. Jesus said to the Disciples when he sent them out preaching, “Before you have gone over Palestine the end will have come.” Those are not the exact words, but they are the exact meaning. What was meant by that? Was that a saying of Jesus, or was it something read into it unconsciously by the writer from memory? It is not a question of deceit, of course. It is simply a question of unconsciously writing that which one’s self believes. Now, if Jesus said that, he was wrong. If he didn’t say it, well,

what other sayings are there that he didn't utter? So you see where we stand. Take the saying about the possession by the devil. Undoubtedly Jesus believed, for the saying is put into his mouth—that a form of insanity was simply a possession by a devil. We don't believe that to-day. Did Jesus believe it, or did the people write that he did? Not desiring to deceive, but simply reading themselves into the narrative. Now, you see we come across in the Gospels uncertainties right in the words of Jesus himself, and either Jesus was mistaken or else those who wrote it were mistaken. There is no way out but one of the two. Now, supposing Jesus were mistaken—we are facing this quite openly, because we all have to face it, he is no longer infallible. And the third infallibility has gone. "Ah," but you might say, "you must not say that." I know the feeling, because I have it myself. But let us remember this, friends, let us divest our minds of a little unconscious hypocrisy. How many, what orthodox people, would follow the teaching of Jesus right straight down? How many do? When the War was on if you had taken the words of Jesus, what would have happened? You would have been called a pacifist, and you would have had a chance, if you had said much about it, of being sent to jail. We do not believe what he said about pacifism. What about poverty? When he said to his preachers, "When you go out to preach, take neither scrip nor staff"—neither money nor clothing. "Go out just as you are, and preach." I do not do it. I am paid for my position. And the most orthodox preacher in Boston, I do not care

who he is, does not do it, it is an impossibility. I have got to live. We do not accept the teaching of Jesus, after all, literally. Strange! We begin to make excuses. We say, "Yes, that was all right in his day." Well, if you take that position, and limit the truths of Jesus by time, do not find fault if we limit his truths also. I remember very well how it was once horrible to speak as I am speaking now, and one man took me very severely to task. When criticising me very severely his little boy came in crying. "What is the matter?" "So and So has been hitting me." Said his father, "Didn't you hit him back?" I said, "Wait a bit, wait a bit, you are criticising me because I do not accept the teaching of Jesus literally. Jesus said, If a man strike, turn the other cheek. Did you tell your little boy to do the same thing?" Unconsciously we do not believe so, and, friends, we have got to come to the conclusion that the infallibility of Jesus has gone, as we once understood it.

Now we come to the crux of the whole matter. What have we to do then? If the Church is no infallible guide, if the Bible be not infallible, and if we have no infallible record of Jesus, where do we stand? Now let us look at our position. We are here, all mankind is here only a short time. The record of man's story is only a moment compared with the story of the universe. It is impossible that we should know all about God. Nobody does. It is an absolute impossibility. There is no infallible knowledge of him, and I do not think there ever will be. But there are helps. We all believe that the story of life is an onward move, ever onward, higher

and still higher. It is a gradual climb, and on the way up there are helps. But, friends, there is no magical way of climbing the hills of God. If you want to climb Mt. Pisgah, you have got to do it on foot, and there is no other way. And you will stumble hundreds of times. You will fall hundreds of times. You will be mistaken often. But if you are a true man or a true woman, you will gradually get a little higher, and as you try to climb you begin to learn a few comparative infallibilities—just a few you will begin to learn. You will begin to learn this, that it is better to listen to the higher voices than the low ones. You will hear, all your life, two sets of voices. One says, in the secret of your life, “Do this. Do that.” Another will say, “No. No. Do this.” And you will know in your own secret heart that one set of voices is higher, the other lower. And what one says, all your life, is this—“I ought to listen to the higher.” That is never shaken. When two ways open to me, “I ought”—that is always inside of me—“I ought to take the higher.” And then as I try to do it I shall find help, as I have said, along the way, and I shall come back to the very things I have been criticising although in a sympathetic way. The Church will be a help, not an infallible help, but a help. The truest things in the Church live. Our worship here lives, and that is a help. In our upward fight the Church helps. And in an upward fight the Bible helps. No book helps so much. And so our old friends, when they understand the position, will just read the old Book as lovingly as they ever did. The Bible helps. And Jesus helps. Do I love him any less

because I know he had the limitations of the first century? Do I love him any less, or rather his way—do I love his way any less because he believed that the sun went down behind the world, as everybody believed? I love his way because it appeals to me. It is the way of life. Jesus helps. And all great lives help. There are helps all along, but none absolutely infallible.

Friends, I am not going to make life easy. I know it isn't. And I know that there is no mystical way of making it easy. All I know is, that I am not the man I should like to be, but I also know the ideal man that I should like to be, and I have got to foot it between the two, there is no magical connection. All I can do is to try, try honestly, use the helps that have been given, and gradually I shall gain a little, if I never do get to the stature that I wish for. I shall grow a little. Never mind infallibility. When in my first church a young man came to me and said, "Mr. Hanson, if you would only tell us in your sermons just what to do, we should know where we were." You see he wanted an infallibility—all I could say was, "I believe I am God's son and like the rest of God's universe I am moving upwards. But I have got to move. If somebody could do it for me, I should only be a secondary. If I do it myself, I am all the better man for it."

We are climbing God's hills. There are guides to help us, but we have got to climb ourselves.

It is said, once, when Whymper was an old man, he stood looking at the Matterhorn. He was absolutely silent. By and by after a long time he turned and went

home still silently. What was going on, I wonder, in his mind? He was the first man who climbed the Matterhorn, and I can imagine, as he was old he was reviewing that climb. I think there were eight of them who started to climb. Six of them were killed. I can imagine the old man was recalling that terrible fight. I wonder if it is not the same in life. When we get a little older we look back and recall our fight with life. If we have fought a good fight, it is an unfailing satisfaction and we go back home ready for the last change. "I have fought a good fight, I have kept my faith." Faith will go with us all. We do not need, after all, infallibilities. All we need is a belief in the Great Eternal and a belief that we are His children. Leave the infallibilities, and be men and women of faith.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we are thankful that we are sent here to blaze the path of men and women, that we are sent here to fight a fight and to win out. Be Thou ever on our side, inspiring by that still, small voice of conscience, and may we ever try to listen to the higher, to despise the lower, to look upwards and shun downward paths. And so may we gradually but certainly become as we should like to be. Amen.

BEING RICH AND HAVING NOTHING

Our Heavenly Father, help us now to spend an hour in Thy real presence.

Help us to inquire, feeling that the Spirit will answer. Help us to worship so that the hour may help us to be the men and women that we should like to be. Help us so that the hour may lift our lives on to a higher level, so that we may more truthfully walk with God. Sanctify each act of our service, so that no flitting thought and no unworthy motive may disturb the quiet worship of our souls. Amen.

Let us join together in silent prayer.

As in the silence we feel the presence of the Spirit, so may there be to-day in our lives peace, calm, and silence; so that as we possess our souls in quiet we may grasp more of the deeper truths of life.

Help us, Holy Spirit, to forget for a time all our ordinary ways, as far as we can. Help us to put from us the anxieties and the hurries of the days of the week. Help us to detach ourselves from the forces of competition and greed which seem so often to hover around us in our lives. During the days of the week we seem compelled to spend much of our time fighting circumstances, we seem to be compelled to spend our time on the things that are temporal, and we have little time left for things that are eternal. Help us to consider to-day the eternal ways, and to think not so much in days or years as to try to think in eras. Help us to forget for a time temporal advantages and to think of the great eternal meaning of our souls and our God. May light conversation and worthless thoughts be forgotten, and may the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart be worthy of our real selves and our high calling.

May the day be spent thus in worthy ways, in worthy

thoughts and in worthwhile ambitions. May we walk with God to-day and understand His ways better than ever before.

And as we thus would be worthy sons and daughters of God, we also would have all men and women rise to greater levels. Be with all who are worshipping, with all who are thinking of the great things of life. Be with all who are yearning after more worthy ways. May those to-day whose souls as it were are seeking the heights, may all such find. May the hands and hearts that are reaching out and feeling out after God find Him. May men live for the day with the Spirit.

Be with all leaders of men for the day; may unworthy ambitions be lost. For the day, may selfish acquisition be forgotten. For the day, may pride of place or position be forgotten, and may the leaders of men consider how to lead worthily, may they consider how to guide to worthy heights, and may they all bow down before the great Lord of all.

May all nations to-day be possessed of peace. May thoughts that lead to peace be theirs, and may thoughts that lead to hatred be put aside. We need so much the quiet days of God. The world in its distraction needs more than all else to be still and know God. May the world this day take those wise words to heart. For a time may activity cease, and for a time may we forget to do and may we seek to be. For a time may we be content to rest and to wait—and to feel the touch of the Father. Grant, the world over, to-day, in the calm and in the quiet, we may learn of the ways of the Spirit, may God teach those ways to us. May the world be the world that it ought to be.

“Dear Lord and Father of mankind!

Forgive our foolish ways!

Reclothe us in our rightful mind.”

To-day may the rightful mind be ours, and also may this rightful mind be in all men, so that in deeper reverence we may live and in deeper peace possess our souls. Amen.

In the Book of Proverbs, chapter xiii, verse 7, from which I read, there occur the following words: "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing." That is rather a poor translation of the original. The original really says: "There is that seemeth rich, and hath nothing." I want to take more that meaning. The Book of Proverbs is a collection of old sayings gathered together from the quiet country folks. If you want a proverb, you have to go largely into the country to find it. A proverb is probably a growth of experience, and then it is put into words by some knowing genius. We do not meet genius in cities. We are all alike in cities, and if you want a unique saying, very often you have to go into the country to find it. And so this Book of Proverbs is probably a gathering together of the common sayings of the Hebrews. It is full of that quiet country observation and country wit. It was probably collected together some time about 300 B. C. It received, as you know, first of all, the name of "Solomon," but probably he had nothing at all to do with it. Probably it was the habit of those old days: the book was ascribed to some well-known man, and as Solomon was always represented to be wise, probably the collection was put to him because of that. It was ascribed to the universally well-known wise man, Solomon.

This morning I want to take thought of one of the sayings and one that is full of very attractive meaning. The old Hebrews said, "Everything is not as it seems," or, as we say, "All is not gold that glitters." "There is that seemeth poor, but is rich," "There is that seem-

eth rich, and hath nothing," "There is that appeareth to be something, and it is nothing." The country folks are apt more—more apt than city folks—to look beneath the surface. They are apt to weigh up, much more than we are in the city. And here we have a kind of weighing up of life—"Life is not what it seems," they say. "We cannot judge by the exteriors, for part of those who seem to have much have little, and very often those who seem to possess very little possess a great deal." "There is that seemeth rich, and hath nothing." Let me illustrate this by very simple things.

We all know, and probably have all had, at one time or another, the habit of collecting—making collections. We begin the habit when we are boys, and nobody can tell what there is in a boy's pocket. We collect all kinds of riches there. Sometimes the mother will very gingerly try to empty out the pockets. We begin in early days making our collection. Then we pass on. Perhaps, by and by, we begin collecting, say, fossils, then perhaps we pass on to photographs. In England, we used then to pass on to collecting crests. I don't suppose you collect crests very much in America, because they are rather in disrepute. Then from collecting crests, if we were fortunate, perhaps we would begin to collect postcards, then we would go on collecting pictures, and then, by and by, we would begin collecting books. I advise and hope that everybody has had that mania at some time or other, the collecting of things together. But there is one secret about all collections: if we can get them easily, they are not worth much. If we happen to have a good deal of

money and can buy a collection, it is not worth much. The old proverb comes in then: "Those that appear to have much, have very little." If a man can buy as many pictures as he likes, very often the pictures are not of real value to himself. The value of a collection is the close personal touch, the hardship that was experienced in collecting, the little bits of personal self-denial that are linked with the articles. For instance, if you remember as a boy how long you saved up before you bought a certain thing, that thing has a kind of peculiar value. When you look at it, it tells the history of that self-denial, and it tells that wonderful joy that came when you happened to have saved enough to get it. The value of a collection is the personal touch of each article in it. And, of course, with books it is so more than ever. A library to be really of deep and personal value is not one that we can afford to buy and buy easily. A library that is worthwhile tells again of the many little personal touches; of books, perhaps, that you saw in a window and had not the money to buy, and you went past there many a day, hoping that nobody else had bought the book. You saved up very carefully and then when you had got the money together you went with great rapture and purchased your treasure. Ever afterwards that treasure stands there, not simply as a book, but it stands there as something else. A library to be worth anything has a history behind it. Books that are dusted and never used are not worth much. The books that are worth anything are the books that are soiled by constant using, the books that are marked pretty freely. There is only one draw-

back in borrowed books and libraries, you cannot mark them, and half the value of a book is in the marks that you make in it. I always like to get hold of a book that is marked, and expect to find, if I know the one who marked it, that there is a value in the marks. Books are valuable as you know them and love them and mark them, they are of value as you can stretch out your hand without even looking, and know where the books are. A library is worth nothing if you do not know where the books are in the dark, if you cannot go straight to the books you want, without match or candle. I believe I could go to my father's library, in the dark, after thirty years; I believe I could go to that library yet and take books out with my eyes closed—after thirty years have passed. A library is what you make your own, the books that you know and just where they are; books that open just where you want them, and books that are marked just where you like them. A purchased library is not worth much. Generally it is full of dust and generally unread. More than anything else, then, probably, in a library, "There is that seemeth rich, and yet hath nothing," and there is "That seemeth very poor, and yet hath much."

Now let us follow this line of thought to the deeper things of life. For what really is true of an ordinary collection, what is true of a little library, is true of the great deep things of life; it is true of the great spiritual meaning of life, perhaps truer here than anywhere else. "There is that seemeth rich," in spiritual things, "and hath nothing."

Now let us see what that means. We all know the outward marks of a Christian, attendance at church, help in financial needs, the use, say, of—although this fortunately is dying out—the use of theological language and terms. We all know the outward signs of religion. How much are they worth? Just like a library, how much are they worth? They are worth just as much as they are worth in being signs of something else. If they simply are outward tokens of something deeper, they are worth something; but if they are simply surface things with nothing below, they are worth absolutely nothing. The signs of spiritual life, in themselves, unless they are tokens, are worth nothing. Imagine having a house full of books absolutely unread. And a person may use all the outward signs of religion and have nothing beneath. And then by and by—by and by there comes a day of disaster. By and by there comes a time when our deep thoughts are necessary, when our foundation truths are required, and we haven't got them. In my life I have noticed it in fateful times. We see one of the usual worshippers has had a great misfortune, and there has been nothing to meet it, and the man or the woman has left church, has put aside altogether professions of religion. They seemed to be religious, but when the difficult days came they had nothing and they simply drifted after the loss. I have seen it several times and it is always a cause of great pain. It shows that there was never a really deep and firm hold of spiritual truths. They had the outward, but never felt the inward.

Now let us consider, therefore, the inward things that

come. It may be—no one can tell, it may be that very briefly you and I will be tried severely, it may be that some time soon or late you and I may have such experience that nobody can help us. There are lots of experiences in life in which no one can help. The real experiences of life are exceedingly personal and we have got to meet them ourselves. There are times in life when I do not want to have anybody give me advice, when I do not want to hear anybody give me sympathy, and when I want to be by myself and fight my own difficulty. And unless I have some foundation then I am gone. And it is so with every one. There often come times in life when, alone, we have to decide our philosophy of life, and when alone we have to prove ourselves either men and women or nothing. Then comes the time when seeming is absolutely no good. We seem to be religious men or women in the world sense, but we have nothing.

Now, what are the deep things that we must have when the real experiences of life come to us? The first, of course, is what we call faith, but the word is often misused: a deep-down belief that there is a God. You might say, all believe that. I am not sure. I am not sure. I have said it scores of times, I have seen it hundreds of times, but I am not so absolutely sure that we all believe it. When all the storms come we need to be able to say, "I know there is a God." Now, friends, it is not so easy as it looks. I have heard many a one that I thought was absolutely sure of that say to me, "Do you think?"—and they said it without shame—"do you think there is a purpose in life?" Unless we both think it and

know it, no matter what comes, we seem to be and are not. The first thing, therefore, is simply a belief that there is a God, and that that God is guiding, and guiding rightly and purposefully.

Now, it is not so easy as it seems—when all that we have trusted in goes, and when we are tried almost beyond the power of endurance, then to be able to say, “I know that all is well.” That is not so frequently seen as we would think. We seem to believe it when we are in fair weather, but often when it gets foul weather we find that we did not really grasp it. I know of what I am speaking.

Then, if we have that, there comes a second possession, which is peace. You have often heard that benediction, which is so beautiful, but so often used that we lose its beauty: “The peace of God, that passeth understanding.” No matter what comes, somehow, deep down, there is peace. You cannot explain it, but you believe somehow that God is doing things rightly and that the life is ordered rightly, and, therefore, deep down you have peace. I have seen very few men in my life who really had that peace. You reckon up in your lives how many of us—how many of us have this absolute confidence. If we really had our religion, we should have that at all times.

Then, having this peace, there is a quiet way of regarding difficulties and troubles. I was amused, during the week, in reading an extract from Hume. He put it in his characteristic way. He said, “To be able to see the advantages in disadvantages is worth ten thousand

pounds a year.” I am not sure we should all value it quite so highly, but I know it is worth a great deal to see the advantages in disadvantages. And Ruskin puts the same truth in a way that perhaps appeals to New Englanders more. He says that sunshine is thrilling, storm is exhilarating. There is no bad weather, it is only different kinds of good weather. I am sure you can all appreciate that. Different kinds of good weather! When we really grasp deep down the certainty that God is guiding—there is no evil, there is no mischance, there is no misfortune.

Now, what I have said, I know is difficult to say. Pain, sickness, and long-suffering come, loss and disaster come, trials come, and apparent defeat comes. Is there nothing back? Can we say with Ruskin there is no bad weather? It is difficult to say it. But if we use it, knowing that God is close at hand, all the seeming ill will turn to good. Faith is a magician’s wand, it changes everything into pure gold. I may seem to be saying what is impossible, but I am certain that I am saying what is necessary to be said. There is no such thing as evil if we use it rightly. I do not mean all evil—sin. There is no such thing as evil happenings, if we use them rightly. They are often inexplicable, but used rightly they are like the very finest fire in making characters more and more noble. That is where I part so strongly with our friends of the Christian Science Church. They close their eyes to half of the experiences of life. They say, “It is not so, it is not there.” I say everything belongs to God. I give nothing to evil, I close

my eyes to nothing, for the darker experiences mean something, death means something, the beautiful experiences mean something. They are all, as it were, in God's world. Just as real is the darkness as the light, just as real is the pain as the pleasure, just as real is death as life; and each is part of God's great world. I am going to give nothing away, for everything that is, to me, is a means of adjustment. I do not say it is sent for that purpose, but I say that when it comes it is a means of adjustment. Now, if we possess a real, deep-down Christian faith, we feel like that.

I have been very much touched during the week at one appeal that was made to me about faith. Some one who was in difficulty asked the meaning of life. That is the meaning of it to me. Whatever is, is to be used, and to be used again, to be transformed into a blessing. God is ever present, never absent. Everything is in His world, and everything can be used as a rung of a ladder to climb nearer and nearer the desired heights. But—then, we have not yet reached that point we thought we had. We seemed to be religious, but we had it not.

Then, possessing this, there comes finally a great optimism. I do not mean a thoughtless optimism; a real, deep-down, thoughtful optimism, which says, "Though things seem dark, God is; though the way is hard and our feet are bleeding, we are approaching the summit. Whatever happens is but a stage to a final perfection." I mean an optimism like that. All Christians must have it. I never place the Golden Age behind me, the Golden Age is ahead of me, and God is guiding towards it. You

and I give the little help that we can give to use towards that end.

Such, to me, are the abiding things that religion gives to us: First, God, certainly; second, the peace that comes from that certainty; third, the faith that whatever happens can be transmuted into blessing; and, fourth, that all things finally lead upwards and that the world is rolling daily nearer to God.

What form the consummation will take no one knows. It may be that this world—and it probably will be—that this world will pass as the planets have often passed, like stars: the world, our little planet, will pass away. But, in the end, I cannot but believe there will be an explanation of all life and of all religious experiences in life. All finally must be well.

I wonder, friends, if you can see what I have been trying to say, I wonder if you can live it out. I expect you all hesitate before you say either Yes or No: the question is so big that you do not know. God help us, so that in addition to possessing the outwards of faith—in addition to seeming, we may have faith. God help us that we may also possess it—that seeming rich, we may also be rich.

I hope that I may help a little, so that when the dark days come to you, you may never tremble, but lean back on the arms of God. To me, that is the best consummation of life. Life consists in nothing else but that. When we feel certain and confident and know—then we have gained the prize of life. I pray, friends, that that prize may be yours.

Let us pray.

Help us, Heavenly Father, so that we may daily know Thee more and more; so that daily we may grow unto Thee. So that whatever happens our grasp of Thy hand may never loosen and our faith in Thy guidance never falter.

May we not only seem to have the essentials of religious life—may we not only seem to have them, but may we deep down hold them. Amen.

SUCH AS I HAVE, I GIVE

Let us join together in silent prayer.

Holy Spirit, to-day we would be earnest in seeking after the things of the Spirit. During the week that has passed we have tried to do our best in the ordinary everyday walks of life. We have been attentive to our various tasks. And, to-day, we would be attentive to the ways and the mind of the Spirit. To-day, we would seek earnestly and seriously the inner things of life. To-day, we would give our thoughts and our attention to the ways of the Eternal. Putting aside the temporal—the things of the day, now we would think of things of the Eternal, abiding and everlastingly true. Help us so to do, and as we so do, may our minds be receptive and may the blessings that come from the things of the Spirit be felt silently throbbing through our life.

May we who are troubled find comfort. May we who are lonely, having lost the companionships of life, feel Thy company more than ever. May the lonely find the companionship of God and His comforting words. May those of us who were, perhaps, anxious concerning the future, find this day added strength so that we may meet our demands more successfully. May those who are in weakness find inner strength. May we all as we need, and as we consider God, find entering into our being the blessings of God. May thus the day be rich with the gifts of the Father, and may the brightness of it find an echo thus in added lightness within. May the clouds that have gathered be dissipated, may the fogs that have hung around disappear, and may we have brightness within and the peace of God which passeth understanding.

And these great inner spiritual blessings that we ask for

ourselves we ask for all men and women everywhere. No matter what the creed or conduct of worship may be, may the seeking soul be satisfied, may the longing soul find itself with God, and may the memories of this day hallow us all, the day when we commemorate the lives that have been given for the land and thus for us. May such day be solemnly and seriously in mind. And may such of us as are benefiting by sacrifice be brave enough to sacrifice ourselves for our land; if we have not been called upon to die for our land, we are still called upon to serve the land. And may this day find us sanctifying ourselves to service.

Be with all lands. May the minds of men and women be attracted to-day to higher types, so that in the discord across the water calm minds be encountered and so may minds that have been led of the Spirit take up the burdens of to-morrow. We yearn, and therefore we pray, for the days when countries shall understand each other, and when whilst living for each other each may live for all and each try to help all. May it be that we may live long enough to see the day when much of this hatred and destruction may disappear and when we all, walking quietly and humbly in the Spirit, shall truly be men and women of God.

Again, we seek Thy Holy Spirit. May we receive it. Amen.

I read to you one of the stories from the Book of Acts, chapter iii, verse 6. In that story these words occur, "Such as I have, give I thee."

I do not want to dwell on the story. It is probably one of the old stories that has been amplified by a desire to enlarge the influence of Peter. I won't, therefore, read the story, but give a fuller meaning to the words that were casually used by Peter. Being asked for money, he replied, "I will give thee such as I have." Although the words were probably casually used, they have a very wide meaning.

In all life we are all giving out. There is never a moment in any life when we are not out-giving, both, perhaps, consciously and certainly unconsciously. Every life affects every other life, and every life gives out to every other life something. We are never quiescent. There is not an instant when we are in company, in which we are not giving out something. And this is not simply true of human beings, it is true of everything. Every thing affects every other thing. One star affects another star. As you know, a planet was discovered because of the effects that were first observed. An electrical disturbance on the sun causes an electrical disturbance on the earth. The mountain, which rears its head skywards, affects the whole district round about. The rolling sea affects all the lands which it washes. A customary traveller, one that is used to passing over the waves, can tell without sight of the land when land is near. Everything affects everything else. And all histories are histories, practically, of effects. Those who live, say, in the mountainous land have their character, those who live in the plains have another character. Our surroundings are always giving to us, and we are always giving back to them. Those who live in the East, of the States, have one character, those who live in the West have a slightly different character, because of the gifts that they unconsciously have been receiving. From all, material and immaterial alike, there is a constant stream of gifts. Why, often, even the air itself affects us. Some days it exhilarates, some days it depresses. There is not a moment in life in which we are not receiving

and just at the same time giving. The street in which we live is affected by our presence. The home, in which we dwell, gathers a tone because of our presence. The church with which we worship gains a certain character from our unconscious giving. There is not—as I have said—a moment when you and I are not giving out.

I want this morning to consider, therefore, the source of that gift. Whence comes—or where is the source of this out-giving? Why is it, or wherefore is it, that I affect you and that you affect me? Whence comes that effect? We might say, “Well, perhaps it is your position, it comes partly from your activities, it comes partly from your possessions, it comes partly from your social standing.” Yes, all that is true. They all affect somewhat, but they none of them are the deepest sources of our giving. That is something else. It is not what I have that makes my influence, chiefly. It is not who I am that makes my influence, chiefly. It is not what I do, that chiefly counts. It is something else. What is it, then, that makes my influence? It is something—somewhere—in myself. It is something—somehow—that I mysteriously have that I give out. We each one have a “something” that gives out itself.

Take countries, and it is true. Take Russia, that great enigma of to-day, concerning which no one knows what is happening, but yet Russia has, somehow, some power in the world. As Graham calls it, she is the “Mary” of the world, with her devotional superstition. Yet she

has something—not in her present unrest, but she gives it in her rest—that is very deep, in her millions. Germany gives something. It is not her past history. It is not her mistakes that she made—her terrible mistakes in seeking material aggrandizement. There is something else in a German that tells. There is something subtle in the German character that we all recognize, yet cannot, perhaps, explain. It is so in France. We can describe the general characteristics of an everyday Frenchman, but when we have described them all there is something else. There is something in a man of the United States. We know the open, outward characteristics, any man in Europe would recognize them—the outward characteristics. But there is something else, there is something in the American character that every nation recognizes. We all as nations have something behind, and that something is what we really give.

I want you to notice that. It is not America's greatness that counts. It is not her acreage that counts. It is that something else. It is not the Englishman's cosmopolitanism that counts. It is something else. There is something deep down, behind every character even of a nation, and it is that something that we take into account. And it is that something that gives us what the Old Testament called a "name." You remember, it is said that the nations sought after a name. It is that something that gives us our real name. It is so even in the States. It is so in the English counties, little as they are, and close to each other as they

are. The Englishman stands for something. The Lancashire man stands for something. The Warwick man, the Birmingham man, stands for something else. Each county, practically, has a certain type of character that it has gained and of which every one is conscious. And it is so, of course, in the United States. The New England States have their type of manhood and womanhood, the Middle States have their type, the Western States have another. I call them a "type." That is the word we use. But what does it mean? There is something behind or underneath, which we recognize, and it is that something underneath which we really give.

So it is even true of cities. The man of Boston, the woman of Boston, is different from the man or woman of New Orleans. What is it? We have been, in each of the respective cities, receiving from those with whom we live, we have been giving out to those with whom we have been living, and we have gradually built up a kind of character which is the thing that we give out.

Why, it is so in churches. The activity of the churches is not the thing deep down that speaks. It is not the number of meetings we hold during the week, or the number of organizations that we have. There is something else. And I am proud of that something else in connection with this Church. I meet it constantly. There is a voice, somehow, that speaks, there is a character, somehow, that lives.

And, of course—of course, it is so in regard to all persons.

Whence comes it? If you like, call it a gift. It is a something that shall really speak and tell. It is something in our inner selves.

And as regards this, I am afraid it is the one thing we neglect. I am afraid it is the one possession that we overlook more than any other. Your inner self, and my inner self, are our greatest possessions. Yet I am rather inclined to suspect that we both neglect that more than any other part of ourselves.

Those who have the gift of color look at a picture and they say, "I like that," or "I like the genius that can paint a picture like that." Those who have the gift of music listen to a great musician and they say secretly, "Would that I could play like that!" So in athletics. Those who are rather fond of athletics see some wonderfully graceful exercisers, and they say, "Would that I could do like that!" Probably all of us could approximate somewhat those great things, but it would be at a price. If I want to paint well, I must prepare for it. If I want to play well, I must prepare for it. If I want to be athletic, I must watch every instant my physical frame. Whatever I want to be, I know I have got to pay the price for it. Nothing perfect is given. Even money-making is not a gift of some great God. It is a genius if you like, or an ability, that is gained by practice. There is nothing given to us anywhere, but the great have learned their greatness at a price. The musician has played, shall I say, thousands upon thousands of hours ere he reached his perfection, the athlete

has practised thousands of hours. Nothing comes but by training and by practice.

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I am stopping now for you to do the thinking.

A character does not come by gift. We gain it by earning it. We gain it by winning it. And in no other way. Saintliness is not a gift, it is a reward. Influence is not something handed to us, it is something we have created. And we are forgetting that. If I want to give out that which is worthwhile, I am not going to do it unless I prepare for it. Saintliness—character—influence come just like everything else—by being lived for. We begin our course in childhood. And here let me say a word for our parents, for a child becomes prepared for this influence by every word of the parents; and every influence of home, and every atmosphere of home help to mould. Then we go along into youth. Every teacher shapes partly this coming influence, every lesson from the teacher's life moulds the youth. The parent and the teacher are giving, perhaps, more than any one else: such as they have, they are giving to their children. And then comes the day when the child shapes for itself, and then comes the time for practice, as you might say. Then comes the constant, continual living.

I am certain that we forget this. We do not give time to ourselves that we give to other things. And, mind you, if we do not give time to ourselves, we shall never gain the power we should wield.

The other day I was talking to the widow of one of our most loved ministers—one of our ministers who

probably stood among the highest in our denomination for spiritual sweetness, for the attractiveness of spiritual beauty. And I heard on all hands how much this man gave out. Men have told me how much he gave to them unconsciously. How did he gain it? Easily? The widow told me that, year after year, every morning before that minister entered the pulpit he read that peculiarly beautiful charge of George Herbert, called "Aaron." You remember, Aaron is described particularly in the Old Testament. He was a priest and the garment of the priest was described. Herbert, as his custom is, allegorizes this, and speaks of the dress of Aaron, that is, the dress of the minister. And every Sunday morning, ere this minister entered the pulpit, he read this little poem to himself :

 "Holinesse on the head,
 Light and perfections on the breast,
Harmonious bells below, raising the dead
 To leade them unto life and rest;
 Thus are true Aarons drest.

 Profanenesse in my head,
 Defects and darknesse in my breast,
A noise of passions ringing me for dead
 Unto a place where is no rest;
 Poore priest thus am I drest.

 Onely another head
 I have, another heart and breast,
Another musick, making live not dead,
 Without whom I could have no rest;
 In him I am well drest.

 Christ is my onely head,
My alone onely heart and breast,

THE HILLS OF GOD

My onely musick, striking me ev'n dead,
That to the old man I may rest,
And be in him new drest.

So holy in my head,
Perfect and light in my deare breast,
My doctrine tun'd by Christ (who is not dead,
But lives in me while I do rest),
Come people! Aaron's drest."

Can you feel there that source, or one of the sources, of the influence of that holy man, every Sunday morning reading that as to how a priest should be dressed, and when he is dressed, humbly saying, "Come, people, Aaron's drest." Can you see one of the sources of that spiritual help? It was not given. The minister gained it by reading and reading and praying.

And what was true of this man in the pulpit is true of you and me all the time. That subtle beauty of character, which is life's grandest possession, is gained by being sought, by being cherished, by being practised.

Are we doing it?

Remember, it is eternally true. Men and women are giving to us all, every day, and they are wanting—they are crying out for something, and all you and I can do is to say, "Such as I have, I give." Such as I have! If we be poor, if we be rich, if we be mean, if we be selfish, if we be Satanic—"Such as I have, I give thee. I give thee the evil I have. Take it. It is all I have. Take it. I have received that evil, I have received that sin. That is all I have. Take it. I give it thee." And men take it. Men take it, and they go back to life all

the worse for being in our company. God forbid that I have cursed any man in my company, God forbid I could curse any man. God forbid that you have given anything like that. And the saint—the saint knows nothing about it, but he gives: just as the minister gave, he gives because he has—"Such as I have, I give."

May you give, as our Master gave, and as all Divine sons and daughters of God should give.

Let us pray.

Help us, Father, to train ourselves. Help us so to live that we may acquire that beauty of holiness which shall render the world more holy. Amen.

MAN'S SEARCH AFTER GOD

Let us join together in silent prayer.

Holy, Ever-brooding Spirit, we pray, this day, to be conscious of Thy nearness, and that all men may be alike conscious. Thou art ever moving through life, ever urging fuller life, and we are all in our way striving to answer the urge, but often we make mistakes and we think that what we can touch and handle will satisfy our cravings; we often think that if we can gain possession of that which we desire we shall be satisfied; we think sometimes if we gain the comfort for which we long, or the power which we crave, or the things which we like, we shall then be satisfied, and yet we know that the unrest still remains and that always we are looking ahead, and always thinking and wondering how to be satisfied.

May we, this day, and may all men, remember the lesson that the wise man of old did learn, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, in thy likeness." May we to-day learn that source of satisfaction. May we to-day think on that one abiding restfulness. May we to-day think of things unseen and of the Spirit which is everywhere.

Be with all who are seeking holiday to-day. May their pleasures be such as leave no sting, may their joys be such as leave no regret. And, perhaps, in the quieter moments they may hear and understand the promptings of the still, small voice.

Listen to-day to the longings of all, the aged and the young, the busy and the idle, the healthful and the sick, those who are prospering and those who seem to be failing. Be with all, and somehow may the little hands of man be enclasped by the larger hands of the Spirit.

And so may the day be one of quiet, inner joy and of real inspiration.

Be with all whose duties may be to assist seekers this day. May all who preach feel the responsibility of their position and zealously and lovingly seek to aid, may they likewise so strive that some words may abide in the hearts of listeners.

Be with all who help in the home, in the hospital, in the jail, or who in any way try to make this day helpful.

Throughout, may it be a day when it shall not be misnamed—the Day of the Lord. And may its influence so abide that to-morrow and every subsequent day may be more holy and purer.

Again, we pray for ourselves. May every worshipping heart here feel God and may every worshipper here go home more hopeful, more joyous, and more holy. So that the day may assist us in the growth for which we all do pray.

Amen.

I want to speak, this morning, on man's search after God. I am taking the topic largely because of suggestions that have been impressed on my mind during the last few weeks of reading. I have been in preparation for something else, obliged to read as far as I could the world-known literature both old and of recent days, and as I have read I have been struck with the very marked impression that man has always been seeking something and that his whole literature, from the very earliest days to the latest, expresses a craving after something. The old Greeks were seeking something. The Latins followed with a search different, but still a search. The Middle Ages perhaps for a time seemed quiescent. Then the search broke out in greater strength than ever. And we find right on from the Middle Ages to the present that search expressed in all

our writings. Man has always been somehow seeking something and we cannot put our finger on any age when the world seems to have been absolutely satisfied. There has always been a something desired that was not possessed, and it was the impression of this feeling that made me choose this subject—man's search after God. But I want to ask you to put, perhaps, a rather larger interpretation or a rather wider significance on God, than we very often do.

When we speak of God we are often asked to think of a person outside of ourselves, and we are apt to think that when we are seeking God we are seeking a voice or an influence coming from that something outside of ourselves. All the old Hebrew writings have that feeling—God was a person walking in the Garden, who looked down to see what men were doing, who talked to Abraham at the door of his tent. The old idea was that he was a person, and I suppose in nineteen cases out of twenty when we think of God we think, I was going to say, unconsciously like that. We think of God as being some person, or outside of ourselves.

I want to ask you this morning to try to think of God as spirit, as a spirit moving around us always, in us always, throbbing everywhere, but it is a very difficult conception. I do not think many of us can so conceive Him in our mind—God is a spirit. Let us try, however, to do it this morning, to bear in mind that there is a throbbing, thrilling spirit everywhere, and we are in that—just as we are in the air of to-day. You know what it means sometimes to step out into a very bracing

air, and the air gets into your very being, and you almost want to jump and shout. If we really find ourselves as we do at times in God's presence, like that air, we have the same thrilling feeling, just as we have in our bodies when the bracing air cheers us up. Let us try this morning, as I say, to think of the Spirit that is everywhere around urging us, aiding us, calling us to a fuller life.

First of all, let us think of it in man's search for comfort. We all know that men began in a very little way, living in some cave, and having, probably, no more comforts than any of the beasts with which they contested. But there was something felt, in that far-off day, by man that others did not feel. There was an unrest somehow even in those earlier days, and by and by we find man feeling out after comforts. Somehow he learned to make a fire, somehow he learned to build, somehow he learned to make clothing; and slowly, gradually, ever urged by some not-understood spirit within him, he sought after fuller and fuller comfort, and now when we think of our homes with all their comforts, what a world of distance there is between the man in the cave and us in our cultured homes. But we cannot help but feel that all the search after comfort has been prompted by the Spirit, that it has been an answer of mankind to the prompting. We have wanted more things, better things, a fuller life. Man has been seeking after it in all that has pertained to his comforts.

Then, man has been ever searching after larger accomplishments, and this is a thrilling search. He began,

I suppose, satisfied if his arms were strong enough to find his food: if he found food and shelter, that was all that he could expect to gain. But there was a spirit in him that prompted him to more than that, and somehow he began to learn how to increase his powers. He learned how to construct the sling, he learned how to sharpen a stone and make a weapon, he learned then how to use metals and minerals.

And with their accomplishment, a voice still urged him to fuller accomplishment. Steadily he grew, began his collective life, and by and by his powers were enlarged a hundredfold. And the voice still urged him on. And so our machinery; machinery and inventions of every kind are only an answer to man's dreams: something calling higher—a dream or ambition in one man calling him higher, and other men followed the individual. To-day, we see a million times as far into the skies as our predecessors. We see infinitely deeper into the earth than our forefathers ever dreamed of. And during the last hundred years we have moved in such an era of invention that no old thinker would ever even have imagined it. What is going to happen in the next hundred years? The voice will still invite upward, the call will still be heard by men of genius. And all, in my estimation, is the voice of God. Man is not destined to a little life, man was too great to live in a cave, man is yet too great to live in a slum. Man is too great to be satisfied with imperfection. Man is Divine, and until he realizes what divinity means, he will have to be growing, he cannot help it. He must be searching for some-

thing within him that says, "Seek. Seek. Seek." And something within him says, "I will." And man goes on finding new accomplishments.

The same is true of man's joys, man's pleasures. The first, I suppose, he had known—if he gained food, he rested; if he gained shelter, he was thankful. And I suppose that was all the pleasure he had, sensuous, the pleasure of the senses. But, again, man was too big to be satisfied like that, and I can imagine that one day, perhaps, in stretching some animal's skin a sound came out of the stretched skin as it was struck, and I can imagine some genius being attracted by the sound, and by and by we have the lyre, the beginnings of music. I remember in one of the caves in the Southwest there are a number of paintings by the old-time Indians, very crude, but you can see what they are—a serpent, a buffalo, a man. Those paintings have been there long, long years. And I can imagine that one day some man saw that he could copy a shape, and the tribe gathered around him and expressed their pleasure.

Thus were born music and art, and then man began further and further to improve, and our pleasures are increasing daily. It is well that it is so. Life, as I have said, is too large to be satisfied with littleness. Every man has been seeking—seeking comfort, seeking power, seeking pleasure, and the search is by no means ended, probably only begun.

But now let me speak of another search which means a great deal more.

All the way through, there has been a "something"

inside of man that has made him seek after the cause of things—made him ask, and catechise himself. “What is the meaning, even, of this urge? What is the meaning of the things I see? Who am I? What is life?” And man has been seeking what life—real life—means. And now we call it the “soul.” We say that there is within us a something that responds to the God around, like the keys of the instrument that respond to the touch of the player. So there is something in us that responds to the touch of God, and we are seeking always to make that response more beautiful and more meaningful.

Literature is one long expression of that desire that man should be played upon by the fingers of God and that man should answer with some worthy reply. We are seeking, seeking. Will the day ever come when man’s long search can end, when man can say, “I have gained, at last, the Holy Jerusalem; now I can be at peace”? Will that day ever come? I doubt it. I doubt it. And perhaps I cannot help but feel that I hope it will not come.

I remember, in the Southwest, climbing Mount Franklin. We started out at noon, we camped for the night, and after a morning’s climb we reached the highest point. But when we reached it, we saw away to the northeast, eighty miles distant, another high peak, white with snow, beautiful, gleaming through the blue distance. And we all said, “Well, we have climbed Franklin, we will climb the White Mountain next.” After about a year, after two or three days of camping, we reached the summit of the White Mountain, and across—this time, to the

northwest, on the borders of Arizona, we saw another white peak still higher. We said to one another, "We will climb that some day." But we never did.

Supposing we had done so, we should probably have seen, to the north then, Long's Peak, higher still. And if we climbed Long's Peak, we should probably have seen a little higher still some of the greater Giant Rockies. And it would have taken our lifetime to climb all the peaks, and yet there would have been higher reaches ahead. It is just like that in our lives, and I think it always will be. We climb one peak and we perhaps feel inclined to say, "There, I have done something worthwhile."

We have had a great many masters of music, who have given us music worthwhile. We have had a Shakespeare, and through him we have risen to the heights of literature. But there are other heights still ahead. We have not yet reached perfection.

And, some day, we find a temptation. We defeat it. Some day, we find a depression, and we conquer it. Some time, some day, we do a noble deed, and at night we can say, without undue pride, "I have fought a good fight." But, deep down, there comes another consciousness which says, "Not as though I had already attained, but I press forward toward the mark of my high calling."

Whatever peak we climb, there is a higher peak ahead. Whatever attainment we gain, there is a fuller attainment awaiting us. I do not know that man will ever be satisfied. I do not know that he should. But I do know that he ought to seek, and that if he be true, he

cannot help but seek. There is God within me. When I hear Him speak, I am compelled to try to be better. There is God within you. When you hear His still, small voice, you cannot help but say, "I must climb higher."

The only difficulty is—and it is marked all through history, the only difficulty is that we men and women are apt to confuse real values. It is right to seek comfort, it is a God-inspired search. But if we think that comfort be everything, what then? It is right to seek possessions. But if we think possessions are everything, how hard it is "for him who trusteth in his riches to enter into the kingdom of the Spirit."

The difficulty is that we confuse values. The only final value is that which appeals to the soul within. The only final accomplishment is that in which the soul itself can say, "I have walked with God to-day."

There is even beyond this the final accomplishment. I want to urge you all to-day to continue in the search. Never be satisfied. Never be contented. Never think that you have climbed the highest peak. Look abroad, and you will find higher ones still ahead. And if you think perhaps some day you have done well, look into the distance and you will see greater heights.

The nearer you get to the heights the more you see higher peaks around. Down in the plain, in the desert, we could see no high peaks, we needed to be on Franklin to see the White Mountain. Down in ordinary life we are apt to be contented. It is when with God that we see the Hills of God. May you ever climb, and may you

ever see in the blue distance higher hills. May you ever say, "I will climb those some day." And when you do, may you see the higher hills still in the distance.

May we together continue to climb, and then when our days of climbing are over, I suppose we shall climb higher still, but in a different way.

God help us ever to seek and some day to partially find.

Let us pray.

We thank Thee, Father, that we cannot be satisfied. We thank Thee that we cannot rest. Help us to seek. Help us ever to be ambitious, ever to be eager after fuller and better things. May our life be one continued expansion, one constant growth. Amen.

THE IMMORTAL TRUTHS OF CHRISTIANITY

May it be, Eternal Father, that the busy, noisy life of mankind be still. May men be quiet this day and so perhaps know God. May all who are seeking with conscious search, and those who are longing in unconscious search, may all alike, in some way, touch the hem of the Divine Garment this day. May the eyes of men be opened so that they see what has never been seen by them before, and may their ears somehow listen to songs that have never been heard before. May the earth this day be more holy than ever before. May those in pain feel the cool hand on their fevered brow. May those in anxiety learn within that our Heavenly Father knoweth. May those who are afraid of the future somehow begin to be confident in God. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted? Hope thou in God." Thus may all in need, all in uncertainty, all with vain wishes passing through their lives—may all to-day see some of the Divine light and may their faces shine with the glory and the beauty of holiness. No matter what the creed may be, no matter what form of faith may have been followed, throughout the whole world may seeking men find, may erring men be taught, and may lost men and women be found to-day. In all homes, the world over, stately or humble, civilized or uncivilized, in all homes somehow may there be a Divine Guest and a responding answer and welcome in men's souls. May the day prove itself a real Lord's Day, and may more than ever men seek the higher and spurn, and hate, and condemn the lower.

Be with all whose minds shall be concerned with

lower things alone: who shall be concerned with the question, "What shall I have therefor?" whether it be the individual or nation that ask the question. Be with them. All who are seeking selfish advantage, somehow be with them. And may it be that in austere silence the soul may hear the Divine question, "What shall it matter if thou gain the whole world and lose thy soul?"

Help us, again we pray. May we all go home thankful that we have talked with God; may we go home larger in outlook, grander in determination, and more beautiful in spirit.

And may the week on which we have entered prove itself a holy week. May we be kept from selfishness, may we be kept from impurity, from harshness of judgment and from foolishness of words. May we be truly, more than ever, sons and daughters of God, and so may the fruit of our lives be an example of the meaning of our faith. And may Christian nations this day so resolve that they may be an example of Christianity, and may all denominations vie with one another in being worthy of their profession.

Again we await Thy guidance, we shall not wait in vain. Amen.

I take, this morning, the subject suggested to me, "The Immortal Truths of Christianity."

It is a commonplace to talk now of the shrinkage of the world, but despite its being commonplace, it is useful very often to remember the fact. The last hundred years has seen tremendous changes in our thoughts as regards the world. Distances have shrunk almost alarmingly. I was reading, the other day, Boswell's "Johnson," and I found that it took them somewhere between nine and twelve hours to travel from Glasgow to Edinburgh, a distance of forty-nine miles. And when they went together on their tour of the Hebrides they were sent off as

though they were going to a distant planet, and when they returned safely they were almost regarded as miracles. I can remember, even in my lifetime, how a journey was a tremendous thing, and if any one from our own village at home thought of going to America, well, we said "Good-bye" and never expected to see them any more; they had dropped out of existence. The world was big as regards distances one hundred years ago, or fifty or thirty years ago. To-day we think nothing of journeyings, we think nothing of a family having the different members thousands of miles apart. Practically speaking, the world is not much larger now than a good sized county used to be.

And, similarly, with this shrinkage of distances there has been a change in our thinking, and especially in our thinking as regards the various religions of the world. We all can remember, even the younger ones here, when it was a question of Christianity first, and all other faiths were simply nowhere. Christianity was life, all others were death. We were very arrogant as regards our claims and we never dreamed of being humble, because we had the light and others were in the darkness. That has changed. We now recognize a community, if you might put it so, of religions. We now recognize that there are many faiths, one of which we acknowledge as Christianity, and we very humbly begin to wonder what there is about our faith that other faiths have not got: what we have that they have not; what we can give that they need to receive.

The other day, I was reading an article on climbing

Mt. Washington in winter, and the writer gives a picture of the climber. On his back there was a rope, snowshoes, creepers, and extra garments. The snowshoes were for certain stages of the journey; in other stages they were useless. The creepers were for a certain awkward corner; everywhere else they were useless. Each article and each provision for the climb was for one set of circumstances; in other circumstances they were of no use. Now, it is something like that when we think of our great faiths. Take our Christianity. There have been certain ways of considering it, that have been useful at the time, for which we have no further use. The Greeks had their presentation of it, which was useful at the time, and which we have very largely in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. Then our Latin friends had their phase of it, which was useful for the time. The Reformation friends had their phase of Christianity, which was useful for the time.

But our question this morning is not what is temporary, not what simply answers for a certain fashion of thinking. But what is there in our faith, compared with other faiths, that is immortal? What have we in the Christian faith that apparently, altogether disregarding time, and disregarding fashion, and even disregarding race—what is there in our faith that will live and will always find itself useful to mankind? Now, that is a very difficult question to answer. What have you in your faith that will be of help, apparently, in every condition of life and in every civilization?

We all recognize that races pass, we all know that

nations pass, we all know that quite differing types of mankind appear. Now, whatever happens, what is there in our faith of which we can say, "Well, this, at any rate, will abide; this, at any rate, will be a blessing under any and all circumstances?"

Supposing you can imagine, or supposing you try to imagine, a conference of really devout followers of all races and religions. I do not mean theists only,—devout men of every faith. Suppose you imagine them sitting around a table and discussing what, in their opinion, will last and is necessary. What could you say for Christianity? Of course, you would not say anything about denominationalism; that is not big enough. You would not say much about the phases of theology, for they change in changing days. I doubt if you would say much about national characteristics. You would leave all those on one side; they aren't big enough. Now, what are the big questions, or, rather, the big phases of our faith, that you consider will last not alone in this century, but throughout the centuries? For many weeks I have been trying to answer that question to my own satisfaction. And it is very difficult. Finally, I found three phases given by Harnack in his book "What is Christianity?" and they seem to satisfy me more than anything I have ever seen stated. I will take them, therefore, this morning, as the Immortal Truths that we have in Christianity. He says they are as follows:

First, the Fatherhood of God; second, the infinite value of the soul; third, the higher righteousness through life. I will repeat them: the Fatherhood of God, the infinite

value of the soul, the higher righteousness through life.

Now let us take each one.

First, the Fatherhood of God. As I have often said, and as you well know, men are always wondering about God and always trying to get some form or image that satisfies their wondering. At one time, men said, "He is a ruler, a mighty ruler"; the friends who lived around the Eastern Mediterranean, the Hebrews, the Mohammedans, took that stand—He is a mighty ruler. Then, others say He is a mystical influence. Probably owing to the rise of this faith in the mountains, the Hindus took this stand—a mystical, mighty influence. According to surroundings and history men make their picture of what they think God is like. Amidst those varying pictures Jesus paints one absolutely different. You know how he painted the Great Power. He always called Him "Father," and his life was altogether colored by that faith and that trust in the Father. Jesus said, "Behind life there is a helper who cares, a helper who loves, a parent who loves to the death." And we have that wonderfully beautiful picture of the prodigal son, as we always call it, which is not simply a picture of the son, but is more truly a picture of the father, and of what God was like in the eyes of Jesus.

I wonder if that is not one of the phases that will stand. It will be a difficult matter to make it stand, for as far as I can read the future, the more we learn of might, the more marvellous it will appear and probably the more ordered it will appear. And as I look into the future and wonder what will take place in the next two or three hun-

dred years, I think I can see that men will find it more and more difficult to believe that the Great Power that is guiding the marvels of life cares—loves—He is a Father. But I cannot think that men can lose that side. We need the views that we get from others. We need to remember, as our friends from Northern India taught us, the mystical wonder of that Power. We need to remember, as the Hebrews taught us, the great, governing might of a Ruler.

I was reading, last night only, a description by Carlyle of his father. He said his old father used to say every night at the close of his prayer, "Give us to be ready for death, judgment, eternity." You can hardly imagine anybody praying like that to-day, in those austere terms. Carlyle's father got his God from the Hebrew Bible. We need that phase of it, but I cannot help but think men will need more than anything else that feeling that God also loves—that He is our Father in Heaven.

That is one of the things that I think—or one of the thoughts of Christianity that I think—will be abiding.

The second thought is the infinite value of the soul. Of course, we measure our soul largely according to our measurement of God. If God be a mysterious Might, we, probably, like the Hindus, wish to be absorbed in that majestic Might. They seek for absorption in that great Power and the soul has fulfilled its end when it is absorbed. If, like the Semitic races, the Hebrews and Arabs, we think of the great, mighty Ruler, naturally we think of men as subjects—obedient servants of the Most

High, and our desire is that we should be submissive to our Ruler. Jesus took another attitude: "I pray that they may all be one" with the Father, "as we are one." The soul, then, was Divine. Each man and woman had within a spark of the Heavenly fire. Each man and woman because of that was a child, a loved child.

And you know how Jesus dwelt on the idea of value—the "losts," and the rejoicing when the losts were found again. You know that chapter of the finding of the lost, and "there was joy in the heavens when the lost was found." The soul was so valuable that even Heaven rejoiced when the soul came to itself. And then you remember often, "What does it matter if a man gain the whole world and lose his soul?"

In each man, in each woman, there is something that is Divine, so worthy that it is a part of God, so worthy that it is, as you might say, a bit of Divinity. That was the idea of Jesus as regards mankind—"Ye are the sons and daughters of God." Will that last? When the races, forgetting their enmities, gather together, will that be a message worth while? Will that be a message that will sweep over the centuries? Man is God's child and within him there is that which is Divine, and that within is the most precious thing in the world. All the world is as nothing compared with that within man which links him to God. I can imagine that that will have something that will appeal to the yellow races, to the black races, to the white. I can imagine there is something in that bigger than any nationality. I think it would be well to say to any man, no matter what his upbringing, "You are

a child of God and your soul within is the most valuable possession in life. It does not matter what else you get, unless you find that, you have not found life." The infinite value of the human soul.

Then there comes the third, higher righteousness through life. I hesitate—I hesitate a great deal before I speak of this. We are now getting on to the line of conduct as one of the assets of our faith, and I dare hardly speak of it. The past few years have shown, I think, that the so-called Christian races have no higher standard of conduct than others. I do not know what I should say on this score were I a missionary and speaking to some Eastern thinker. I do not know what I could say. I think I should feel very much like the picture that Jesus drew. I think I should prefer to enter into my own private room and say, "Father, I have sinned and am no more worthy to be called Thy son." But, of course, all religions have this difficulty. Every religion has a mountain peak that no one has scaled, every religion has an ideal that no one has yet reached. And so with our faith. We have an ideal of conduct that we have not yet reached. We are far—yes, very far from the summit. But what is our ideal of conduct? It is the one very largely that Jesus pictured. First, it is an ideal—ideal Divine. "Ye are the sons of God, act like sons. Ye are Divine, act like that, looking ever to God and remembering ever your parentage."

The one drawback that often I find in reading a biography is that the first three or four pages have always been genealogical, and of course I find, and you find, that every

person prides himself on his genealogical tree. That is all right if it makes him act the nobler and grander. If a Cecil can say, "I am a Cecil, for generations my forebears have been servants of their land. I will give myself to my country," that is all right. You or I can say, "I am a son or a daughter of God; I must act accordingly, bearing in mind my parentage." And then the conduct is included on the human side. "As I am a child of God, so is every one else. I must act accordingly. I must act as one of a great family." Nationalities and races make no difference. We are all sons and daughters and must act in that relationship. I say we have never done it yet, but is not that one of the contributions that we can perhaps make to the universal life, of the picture that we are all children of one Divine home?

Such are three, to me—three of the gifts of Christianity to universal life. The Fatherhood of God, the infinite value of the soul, righteousness through parentage—if you like to put it so, or through life.

Will you think over others, if you can? But, most of all, will you bear this responsibility in mind? Distances separate less and less, and races will come more and more face to face. Races will more and more measure up each other. Religions will stand shoulder to shoulder and will more and more measure up each other. The age of isolation has gone completely. The Hindu will stand and look into your face and then he will watch your life. Your claims will be nothing. Your contribution to mankind alone will be considered. Are we sensible of this responsibility?

I have heard it said that America did splendidly when she gave back the money from the Boxer Rebellion, when she gave it back after she had taken out what was necessary to repair the evil done. Do you remember, at the same time the Buddhists of Japan would not even take enough to pay for the damage? They said, "We went into that country as a duty, of our own freewill. You have no business to have to pay for it, we will stand all of it." The Buddhist even went one better than the Christian in that. And you remember other phases of that Rebellion not nearly so notable.

We have got to the day when we stand face to face and we have to prove that we have that which will bless mankind. What I love more than anything else is the feeling that when I talk of a Father I have something infinitely valuable, when I talk of the soul I have something infinitely valuable, and when I think of conduct as outlined by Jesus I have something infinitely valuable. But when I have told all that, I have then got to live it out, not simply as an individual but also as a member of a nation. God grant to us Christian nations a change in our life, a change in our international conduct. May the day dawn ere long when we shall in our international life live out the immortal truths of our faith.

Let us pray.

Help us, Father, as Thy children to live according to our birth and family. Help us more and more continuously to remember our responsibilities, and may we ever so live that men may be drawn towards our Great Father. Amen.

CHANCE AND DESERTS

Heavenly Father, grant that on this day there may be visions of Thyself vouchsafed to men. In the comparative quietude and cessation from toil may men see visions and dream dreams, and may it be that many will declare in their own hearts, "Lo, God is here!"

For a few hours may the turmoil, the anxiety and the search after things seen be forgotten and in numberless places may the eyes of men, as it were, be opened and may they see that which so often is unseen. May the sanctuaries especially be holy to the hearts of the worshippers, and in the minds of worshippers may it be known that angels are ascending and descending, and may many vows be made to-day to leave behind lower satisfactions and to seek after higher attainments. May there be in every sanctuary an earnest, faithful service, and also, in answer, a soul-satisfaction. And in all places else may it be that there may be visions, perhaps some seemingly by chance and some as a climax of long desires. May there be over the world, for a time, a Divine mood, a Divine longing and a Divine satisfaction. For a time, may the peace of God which passeth all understanding dwell richly in the hearts of men and women.

May the governments of men forget their scheming, may the nations of men forget their selfishnesses, may the rulers forget what seems likely to bring popularities, and, for a time, may there be a hush, a sincere search after the real things that mean life. May this thus be God's day, when God's ways are considered and when God's ways are desired.

And so may this day have an influence, a great influence, on the days of the week on which we have entered. May the influence be seen in a greater longing for peace, in a greater willingness for sacrifice, in a forgetfulness of our rights, and a remembrance of the word Duty. May there be a dif-

ferent atmosphere throughout the whole week because of the holiness of this day.

Help us all, so that with heart and with soul, we may spend a day with the best things. Amen.

I want to ask you to think over those words out of the story of Jacob, Genesis, chapter xxvii, verse 16: "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." As you know, there are two stories running right through the Old Testament, an earlier, and what you might call a later—editorial comment. The first story of Jacob, the older, says that he cheated Esau and then had to run away. That, being the older, probably is the truer. The second story says that the mother was anxious about the marriage of Jacob and persuaded the father to send him away to marry a woman of their own clan or tribe, a cousin, and then the editor adds that story, which is so attractive, of Jacob's dream. It is a story that is very much like all the stories that gather around the saints. It is probably a later story that gathered around Jacob when he became a national hero. It is just the type of story that was likely to gather around a Saint. Jacob dreamed that he saw the angels ascending and descending. And then, if you remember, when he awoke he said, "God is here, and I knew it not." It seems like—it seems almost like—a chance dream and a chance revelation.

And, this morning, I want to speak of chance in that way, and also, later, of deserts that come because we deserve them—of things that come by chance and of things which we apparently deserve. I take this subject

very largely because of the suggestions that seem to have come to me in the Women's Alliance as we have been studying the lives of the Saints. I do not know whether you have noticed that in all the Saints, so far, it is said that there was a voice that woke the hero to a different life, and that set me wondering how many stories of that kind there are in connection with the great writers of religious thought, and I worked it over and I began trying to collect in my own mind such as I knew. And I should like, if I could do it, by wider reading to try to extend the list of those who claim to have heard a voice and to have seen a sight, and to have had by chance some revelation of the Unseen World.

Now, take just haphazard some of the names you all know. Perhaps you, like myself, will be interested to follow out others of the same type and theory of thought. You all know the story of Paul, as he was then called Saul: how, going to Damascus, he saw a sight and heard a voice that those about him did not see and did not hear. But whatever happened it changed the whole character of the man. Paul, then, was one who had that experience. Augustine, you remember, had it too, when he heard a voice saying, "Take and read," "Take and read." Francis had it when he said a voice told him to rebuild that little chapel. Jacob Boehme, whom we are going to speak of next time in the Alliance, had it when he sat at the cobbler's bench. He said he saw a gleam of light and his life was never the same afterwards. Joan of Arc, you remember, heard a voice, and from being a

quiet village maiden she became the leader of the troops. John Bunyan had it in those lanes of Bedfordshire. Later, you remember, he said he also saw a vision. George Fox tells the same experiences, on the moors in Westmoreland. It is surprising how many of this type of writer seemed to have had this peculiar experience. In John Wesley's life he mentions that there were six hundred and fifty-two converts in London and he said that every one of them mentioned some striking experience of this kind. Then I have been reading, to follow it up, James's "Varieties of Religious Experience," and he mentions case after case where it happens, and perhaps the most striking was one of the men named Ratisbonne, a free-thinking Jew of French extraction. He was chatting with a friend, outside one of the churches. The friend was trying to convert him, and Ratisbonne made nothing but fun of the whole conversation. He was witty, and turned it to a witty sally. Then whilst waiting for the friend he turned and went into the church, to pass the time. When his friend came back Ratisbonne had seen something. The friend found him lying on the floor of the pew, and he became straightway a priest.

Now, I do not know—we cannot understand these things. Nobody can tell just what they mean. We cannot laugh at them. We cannot simply dismiss them and say, "O well, they are subconscious experiences." They are there. They undoubtedly have come, they undoubtedly have influenced life. And perhaps if we feel a little inclined to smile at them, we ought to bear in mind

that similar experiences occur in different walks, not simply in the walk of religion. For instance, we know in the world of invention a man may toil and toil and toil at an invention, then suddenly by a flash of intuition he sees what he ought to do; or a scholar, a student, works away at a problem, to find no answer, he can see no way of solution, then, perhaps, one night, while he lies sleepless, everything becomes quite clear. In fact, it is so. Don't we say when we are wrestling with a problem, "Well, let's sleep on it," and very often in the morning we see a new solution. The same is true of poems and writing. You know Matheson, of whom we are going to speak in the Women's Alliance later, had one evening almost such an experience, and he sat down and wrote in a few minutes that wonderful hymn, "O Love that Wilt not Let Me Go." He said it simply came, he never thought about it, he wrote it right straight down, as a boy would say, "out of his head." The same is true, time after time, of other writers. You read, many a time, how some day they seem to be illumined and they set down the revelation. What does it all mean? Is it not true that there is another world besides the world we see, that there is another life besides simply the life of touch and taste and smell, and sometimes it seems as though the veil that divided the two lives were very thin, as though we could almost peer through and see the other life. Or, to change the figure, it seems sometimes as though the clouds rend and the sun shines through just for a moment. I cannot explain these experiences. Nobody can. I am a little like James

himself. When he was writing his book he told a friend that he longed to be like a certain character in that book, who suddenly saw a sign, and became a new man. James said he longed to have an experience like that. We cannot explain it. It seems like, as I have said, a ray of sunshine from another world. And it seems, many a time, as though they come by chance. Is it chance, or is it deserts? Is it a deserved revelation?

Even in other walks in life we find, as I have said, almost revelations, but we find they come—they come only to those all ready for them. Let me mention several instances. A botanist finds a plant for which others are looking. Why does he find it? Because he knows the plant's habits, and he knows where to look. He makes a chance find, but it is because he knows a good deal of the plant. Or an entomologist finds a rare insect. Why? Because he knows the habits of the insect. He comes upon it, as it were, by chance, but it is not all by chance because he knows what to do. Take the life of Pasteur. When he was sent down to South France to try to combat a disease that was troubling the silkworm, he fought the disease, and at last cured it. And in the search he says himself that apparently, as if by chance, he tumbled upon the thought that by injecting a slight part of the disease he could make the subject immune from the disease of the whole. It was his chance, he says. It was quite stumbled upon by chance. But he was a scholar. He was ready for that revelation. And because of it, all our operations in our hospitals are

infinitely more successful. It was a chance thought, but it was not chance, because Pasteur was ready for it.

It is the same with an artist. He sees a picture, and puts it down, and the world is delighted with it, and they say, "Well, we never saw that." The artist was ready to see, and, therefore, he saw. I had a striking instance of that in New York. I was talking to an artist who had been with Peary, and was with him when Peary got home. Peary was very materialistic. He could naturally see nothing except his expedition. He lived for the expedition, and he could not see anything else. One day the artist saw a beautiful glow of light over the ice. He went and sat, although it was far below zero, he went and sat back of the ship, painting the glow of light over the ice. Peary went up to him and said, "What in the world are you doing, with your back to the ship? What are you painting that way?" Evidently, Peary thought he ought to be turning the other way and painting the ship. The artist said, "I am painting, or trying to paint, the beautiful light," and Peary saw it. The artist could see the beauty; he was ready for it. And you can see the picture he painted, in the art gallery, to-day, in New York.

It is chance in one sense, but it is a desert, a deserved experience, in the other.

Now, all this I have taken because I want to speak of the experience in a religious sense. The same law holds good in your and my spiritual experience. What we get or receive in our spiritual life may seem to come by a

flash, just as the vision, say, of George Fox. All those visions come, apparently, by chance, but they come because we are prepared. You know the Old Testament stories abound in these experiences. Moses retiring on the mountain and asking to see God; Jacob, when an old man, wearied with life, wrestling all night with God; the writer of the Book of Job making his hero say, "Oh that I knew where I could find Him!" The Old Testament is full of those stories. And our lives are just as full. I do not believe there is a man anywhere who, some time or other, does not long to see behind the veil, to know the explanation of the hidden life. At some time or other, we all have that longing. How can we find it? It may come—it may come in a dream like Jacob's. It may seem to come by a sudden revelation, but it will not come even in that way unless we are prepared for it. I never admired the man Jacob very much, but we all know that he was a man who thought a good deal about the inward hidden life. And his revelations came because of that thinking. Unless we think of the secrets of the spiritual life, we shall never find them. There may seem to be a chance, but the chance comes only to those who deserve the chance. And I want to speak very briefly of several ways of earning, as it were, earning that insight into the higher life.

We are all differently situated. What is to me a spiritual lesson may not be at all one to you. What is to me a way to grow may not be the way to another. We all are differently placed. There is James, who finds

God through philosophy, others find God after a proven life, others by a certain conversion. We differ.

One way that I think is applicable is the way of work. Many men and women, to-day, are nervously excited. We want to be going and doing. If we are built that way, the only way to find God, that I can see, is by doing. "He that doeth the will, shall know the doctrine." If we are actively constituted, the only way to prepare for the sights of the Unseen World is by activity, by service.

The second way is by battling. Battling—fighting. It may be, fighting temptations; it may be, fighting our own tendencies; or, it may be, by fighting pain and disease. It is surprising how many of the Saints have become saintly through fighting. I wonder if Amiel would have had half that spiritual dream if he had been a strong man. I wonder if he didn't gain that spiritual insight because of fighting consumption. I wonder if "Amiel's Journal" would have been half as good as it is but for the physical weakness. If he had been a physically strong man, we should not have had the Journal. He learned by the things he suffered. I wonder if the great seers are not often made by the fighting they had to do. It may be—I make the suggestion—it may be that just the things we hate and fight are the things that eventually will be the means of spiritual revelation. There are some, therefore, that must find God by fighting.

Then there are some who find Him by reading quietly and thinking. The first type, the active, nervous type,

would never find Him through a book. The quieter type find Him there.

Then another way of finding God is in the country—through Nature. I think this is the way that I find Him best, in the quiet beauty of the woods, in the silence of the desert, in the stretches of the moorland. I sometimes feel that without those I should never have deep religious experiences.

Ernest Thompson Seton tells a delightful story of an old savage. Seton was very fond of this savage, and took him to New York to show him the sights. He took him across Brooklyn Bridge; he took him on Broadway, with brilliant, glaring lights; he took him on the underground railway, on the elevated, and then finally took him to the Grand Central Station. And when they were standing in that beautiful entrance hall Seton turned to the savage, and said, "What do you think of New York?" The savage's reply was, "We don't bridge rivers as you do, we don't have the glare of light to obscure the stars as you do, we don't go over the earth and under it as you do, but we have peace of mind. We have peace of mind." A wonderful reply to me—peace of mind, because in the country, perhaps, that is another way of finding God.

Then, there is another way. In solitude. Not necessarily in the country, but by one's self. When Seton told that story he was in the presence of a well known African missionary, and the missionary said, "Well, I could tell you a story very like that. I didn't often talk about England when in Africa, but one day I began

to boast a little about England. I was going home, and so I began to boast a little to the Chief about what I should find when I got home to London. And as I told him about the things I thought of, how when I got to my house I could touch a button and flood the house with light, how I simply had to turn a faucet for water when I wanted it, how there was heat all over the house, and all the various things of our present-day civilization, then I said to the old Chief, 'What do you think of it all?' The Chief said, 'Well, I don't know, except remember this when you get back, that to be better off does not mean to be better.' " To be better off does not mean to be better. There is a great truth there. It is not what we surround ourselves with that will lead us upwards. I think it is largely what there is inside of us. And those of us who can be contented to be by ourselves, not thinking of the things outside very often, reach very near the gates of Heaven.

These are five ways that I think reach toward the upward land. There are many others. All I want to urge is that you try one of them, it does not matter which. I know you are longing for a view of the Unseen. I know that you would like to understand more of the Unseen World. It comes only by deserts. If we deserve the knowledge, we shall find it. "He that seeketh, findeth." Let me urge you again to seek, for it is infinitely worth while. Life is not worth living unless this is one chamber of a great Divine mansion. If I felt that life began when I began my life and ended when I ended mine, I should feel like Omar Khayyam, that

God ought to take our forgiveness for His creation. Life is not worth living if it simply consists of what we can see. But if it be part of a wonderful home, if "trailing clouds of glory" behind us we come from God who is our eternal home, and we find that we enter another room of our Father's house; and if all the pain and sorrows and trials are simply part of an education, if here we are making a Divine soul, if this is simply one grade of life, it is worth having. I can understand it then, and I want to know more of that life of which we are a part. Don't you feel like that?

We are part of a great whole. What the whole will be nobody knows. We understand that the great planets and the great worlds above are born and die. We understand that everything created is born and passes, from a soap-bubble to a planet; but if the passing is simply a moving on to another stage better still, it is explicable, and explicable so alone. I believe that all is simply a part of the whole, and, therefore, I want to know as much as I can of the whole, and I want to see it. You feel like that. "Seek, and ye shall find"; perhaps, some day, by a sudden beauty, or perhaps only by a continued search. Step by step you will climb the heights, slowly and painfully you will leave the valley behind, but all the time you will be gaining a wider vision. God grant this widening experience. May you and I grow in spiritual strength and beauty.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, lead us onward, lead us upward. May our life be one enlarging life. Every day may our vision

be more extended, and the longer we live the more may we know Divine sweetness and Divine providence. May each day be a day of growth. If, perchance, some days are days of pain, if some days we revert, forgive us, and may every failure but lead to increased effort. May we grow in graciousness and in the knowledge of the love of God, our Father. Amen.

THANKSGIVING AND ITS RESPONSIBILITIES

Holy Spirit, we would come into touch with Thee, listening to Thy voice, which speaks in the silence of our lives, which speaks through the assembly, the congregation of our friends, and which speaks in the associations of the day. We would listen to this voice, this day. We would better understand its message, and we would seek for strength to be obedient to the voice.

Help us in this, our morning's devotion, so that we may be really assisted towards the height of manhood and womanhood that we wish to attain. May each waiting soul be blessed. Amen.

As you all know, we are this week celebrating Thanksgiving, and to-day I want to speak on the topic of "Thanksgiving."

To me one of the most remarkable memories of the early Pilgrim Fathers is the holding of their first Thanksgiving service. Their winter, as you know, had been a trying one. They had lost, practically, half of their number. Then there came a new contingent from across the water, which contingent they expected would bring food and machinery; instead of which they landed without anything and were simply an added burden. The outcome was anything but rosy. The days ahead were dark and depressing. Everything seemed to be almost gone, and yet we find them thanking God for His

gifts. It is a remarkable picture rendered possible only by their theology. Those early Pilgrims believed absolutely in the sovereignty of God. God was to them a great, awful, sublime being. They themselves were nothing, they merited nothing, what they received they received not from their deserts but from the goodness of that great God.

We do not care for that theology to-day. It does not appeal to us. The old idea of the sovereignty of God we leave on one side, and we do not talk about ourselves as being utterly unworthy. But we ought to bear this in mind, that, strange to say, the ages in history when men have talked about their unworthiness have been the ages of accomplishment. The men who have said that they merited nothing have somehow beaten the men who have thought themselves something, all the way through. The Pilgrim Fathers said they were worms in the dust, but we know that they were real, strong men and women.

When I was wondering what to say on this topic, I thought I would turn to the essayists and see if I could get any hints from the modern essays. For some time I have been collecting modern essays. I like to read them. But when I began to look at book after book I could not find a single essay on "thankfulness." I don't know whether you know any such essay, but I could not find one. Then I remembered suddenly that essay of Charles Lamb's on "Grace before Meat," and I went and opened that again and reread it. You know the old essay. Lamb speaks about the habit of having grace before meat, and he says he cannot understand how it is

that that habit is applied to eating. "Why should there not be," says he, "a grace before taking a walk, a grace before having a moonlight ramble, a grace before meeting with friends, a grace before opening Shakespeare, or reading Milton?" You see Lamb's idea. But remember, Lamb is one hundred years old. Not being satisfied with that, I remembered the Harvard Classics. So I turned to the Harvard Classics to see if I could find anything there on "thankfulness," and found three references. I turned to them, and one was a reference to Epictetus, another was a reference to a Psalm, and another was a reference to Cato. These were older still, you see. There is not one that I know of that is modern that speaks of that humble aspect of thankfulness. It is out of fashion. The quietest virtues are just for the present submerged. We do not speak about humility. One man said to me once: "I hope to goodness you will never preach on that text, 'The meek shall inherit the earth.' " We do not like that way of thinking to-day.

But, friends, there is something in it yet. I know we do not like the idea of the sovereignty of God. We do not like to think of God as a great, august ruler. We let that go. But supposing we let that go, isn't there something else in life besides what we see, behind the beautiful country, behind the whispering woods, behind the murmuring waves, behind the active business, behind the love of home? Isn't there something else? Isn't there another world behind the world we see? Aren't we in our best moments conscious that there is

something else in addition to the physical? There is not a person in this Church who has not some time or another felt the veil very thin between the seen and the unseen. There is something behind, and we all know it at times. And from that something comes life's best. You can call that something what you like. I am not going to bother about words. You can call it God, if you like, you can simply say the Unseen. We won't trouble about words. But coming back to the Unseen, I venture to say that all that is worth anything in life comes from it. Now that is a great statement. I venture to say that out of that Unseen the best possessions we have come as gifts.

Let us think together of the things that come.

We begin thinking first of our country. I am not going to boast. I am not going to make any extravagant claims. But the country in which we live is unique. It is self-supporting to a degree that no other country ever has been. It covers all types of climate and therefore all types of produce. Those who discovered it had no idea of its greatness. As you remember, Columbus thought he had found a new way to the East Indies. He had no idea what he had found. We are apart from old feuds. We are cut off from old, conflicting antagonisms. There are no enemies at our gates. We have no dread of any invader. Think how different that is from the countries in Old Europe, who have always behind their consciousness the fear of an invading army. And without any boasting I say that no country has ever had the

riches that this country has, and yet neither you nor I earned those riches. They are a gift. They are absolutely a gift. Isn't that so?

Then take, secondly, our opportunities. Our country is a gift, our opportunities are a gift. The first thing that struck me when I began to live in America was that fact of opportunity. I had been used, of course, to the old-fashioned way of living, the old set, staid way, and when friends suggested they call on us I was embarrassed. We were living in a very humble way, and at last I said to one of them, "Well, we should be very glad to see you by and by, but we are not ready yet to receive visitors." He knew what I meant and he burst into a hearty laugh. "Well," he said, "that is all right. There is not anybody living in El Paso to-day who was not living like that once. We all began like that." My dentist came into El Paso as a hobo. My lawyer, who is one of the leading men in El Paso to-day, walked right across Old Mexico. He could not afford to do anything else. You can ask man after man. They all began like that. And there was no fear about it. If they didn't do very well at one thing, they did something else. It was a new life to me altogether. The opportunity was unique. And isn't that opportunity a gift? We haven't earned it, we haven't paid for it. It has come to us free.

Then our health—our health. I know we cannot have it without care, which we too often refuse to take, by care we can preserve or enlarge our health. But what a narrow line that is—what a narrow line there is between

life not worth living and life abundant! When I look back on the early married life of people I almost tremble at the narrowness of that line. How many fathers and mothers, say with two or three little children, would miss disaster if ill health came. I wonder sometimes what would have happened to my family if I had been thrown on one side after, say, five years of married life. And all new homes are like that. There is just a slender line between prosperity and dire poverty. What keeps us right? Isn't our health, after all, a gift from somewhere?

Now I am going to come to some things, perhaps, that might be little apt to be classed as gifts. Take our ability. I know we can cultivate it. I know we can enlarge it. I know by scholarship and education we can enlarge our abilities, but we are only building on a foundation that is there. Out West—take another illustration out there, when we went there there was nearly always a shortage of water in July and August and we lost our crops. The Mexicans simply shrugged their shoulders and said, "Well, it is the Will above." But the Teutons and Anglo-Saxons got their heads together and before long a great lake was built one hundred miles up the valley and we had no shortage of water. The Northern European had initiative and ability. Where did he get it? He had cultivated it to an extent, but where did he get the foundation on which to build? Was it not an inherited gift very largely? You cannot make a man unless you have something to make him of. Mr. Thompson would tell you you cannot make a scholar unless there are some brains to start with. There is something

at the bottom of all ability. Where does it come from? Isn't it there waiting, deep down? Isn't it a gift?

Then let us go further still. Take our real pleasures. I mean the most pure and abiding pleasures of life—a walk in the country, a climb up the mountains, a breath of moorland air, our lungs filled with the breath of ocean, books, libraries, the most abiding joys, where did they come from? Neither you nor I could make the mountains or the sea, we have not the ability to write the books. They come to us. They are placed at our feet. They are gifts, after all.

Then again take goodness and evil. Now I am treading on very thin ice—goodness and evil. You remember the saying of that old bishop when he saw a man going to prison: “There, but for the grace of God, I should be the one to go.” In the Old English ballad there occur these lines:

“There sleeps in Shrewsbury jail to-night
Or wakes as may betide,
A better lad, if things were right,
Than most that sleep outside.”

Is that true, the lad who “sleeps in Shrewsbury jail” is he a better lad than the lad who sleeps in his mother's home? The old ballad goes on to say the difference is because of circumstances. I know that is dangerous. But how many have gone wrong by a chance meeting, a chance companion, or by chance opportunities! And how many have kept right because the temptation did not come at a certain moment. Do you remember that old

story of the war? A sergeant was found running away in fright, deserting his post. He was tried by court martial and condemned to be shot, but before the sentence could be carried out there came a sudden attack of the enemy and every man was needed. The sergeant was ordered to take his place in line again because of dire necessity, and he shone out above them all and received the V. C., the Victoria Cross. Why was it? At one moment something gave way inside—he was a coward just for the moment; then in another opportunity he was the bravest of the brave. Sometimes I cannot help but think it is just that opportunity, just that something giving way, that defeats the good. And if the bad escape us, then we need to be very humble, for very often the happening is something out of our control.

Then, again, there are the darker things of life, and I am going to class these as gifts. We have all known sorrow, we have all known disaster, we have all known pain, we have all known separation and death. We would not have chosen them. They came to us, and when we look back on the worth that they have wrought on our character we regard them only as gifts. Isn't it so? I know the many things you would do without if you could, but haven't they been gifts? Haven't they made you better men and gentler women? Haven't they made you stronger characters, after all?

Then there are "memories." Nobody can explain our memories. Every time I smell sawdust I go back in an instant to Russia, because I spent a lot of time there in the saw-mills. It doesn't matter what I am doing, the

very smell of wood takes me back. And isn't it so all day long? Some little incident happens and you are carried away. You see, perhaps, a daffodil and you are carried away to a wooded slope. You see a little shell and you are carried away to a delightful voyage you *once* had. Where does memory come from? We don't know. It is a gift.

Now, have I over-emphasized? Is it not real that the best things of life, from our country right down to our personal sorrows, right through the whole line, is it not true that they come—they are gifts?

What should be our attitude? I say that we have lost the attitude of thankfulness. Shan't we come back to it? You can, as I said, class God as you like, but cannot we, should not we, go back to that old idea of thankfulness?

“Let us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord, for He is kind,
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

“All things living He doth feed,
His full hand supplies their need,
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.”

Isn't that true?

For a time, let us be humble, let us be reverent, and then let us go further still and for what we have received, in addition to being thankful, consecrate those gifts to God. Our country, given to us, let us labor to make it still more God's country; our ability, given to us,

let us further increase it; and our virtues, often given, let us make still more virtuous.

We thank God for His gifts, and we pour them back at His feet, and promise to use them as becometh a gift.

Let us pray.

We thank Thee, Father, for the many gifts which are ours. Help us to take them in humble reverence, and cultivate them with untiring diligence, so that more and more we may be worthy of that which comes to us, so that that which comes may be still further beautified.

Help us to be Thy humble servants. Amen.

THE INSPIRATION OF LONELINESS

We thank Thee, Father, for the times of communion, for the times when we can separate ourselves from the noises of life and in the solitude touch God. We are thankful for the numerous times when we have known this quiet communion, we are thankful for the times when we see, as it were, God, when we hear Him speaking, and when our hearts truly respond. Grant unto us that these moments may be more and more frequent. Help us to seek Thee more often, and so help us to become stronger within and, therefore, more helpful without.

May this day be marked as the day of quiet communion. May we all, to-day, so experience the Divine Presence that we shall almost be compelled to say, as the old-time teacher said, "Such experiences as it is unlawful to speak of." May we know in our hearts that we are with God. And so may the day help us to be truly the men and women that stand before us as ideal. May we reach nearer to our ideal in all things.

May the day help us in meeting our difficulties, in carrying our burdens, in walking, perhaps, in sorrow, and in the times of quiet loneliness.

May the day help us when we are fighting temptation, when we are fighting the difficulties of the lower and trying to be obedient to the invitations from the higher.

May the day in every way be God's day to us. And likewise we pray that it may be so to all. May all mankind, to-day, in some way feel God. If the day be spent in excitement or, perhaps, unworthy aims, may there be some whisper of holiness, some suggestion of worthiness.

Be with all who are in office, guiding the affairs of mankind. Be with all who seem lost in the crowd. Be with all who are prosperous, all who seem to be failing. Be with

all who have a work to do, and those who do not yet seem to have found their tasks.

In the homes, in the highways, in the villages and in the cities alike may God's voice be heard and may God's men and women be recalled to their noble heritage.

Be with us as we separate for the season. If it be that we travel, may God be present wherever we be. If we climb the mountains, may we hear God there. If we walk through the woods, may they be temples of the Most High. If we tread the sands by the sea, may there God be touched. If we travel over the sea great distances, may we discern the Almighty. In whatsoever home we spend the days may God be near. If we remain toiling, doing necessary tasks and sometimes wearied because of them, in the weariness may God lay His hand upon our brow and may we gain new strength and new hope. May each day be God's day. May each experience, whether it be hard or easy, be an experience in which we find the help of the Father.

And so as the days come and go may we all grow in the things that are worthwhile and may we outgrow the things of no lasting account. And if it be that we gather together again in the fall, may we come having seen new visions, with added physical strength, with more fully developed mind, and with a more lasting determination to live the life that is our duty. Amen.

You will remember that I read three extracts from the life of Moses, Exodus iii, 1-7; xxiv, 9-18; Deuteronomy xxiv, 1-6; that these three extracts represent three crises in the life of that old hero, and I want, to-day, to speak of the deep meaning in those crises.

First, when Moses was a young man. Picture to yourself a lonely sunrise. Out of, or above the darkness there arises in the east a kind of light, pearly glow. Slowly the stars fade, and slowly this pearly light spreads towards the zenith. Then the light of pearl gives way

to the pink, then the pink yields to the ruddy red, and then suddenly a golden glow shimmers over everything and the higher branches of the desert undergrowth are tinged with this golden glory. They are transformed for the moment. At one time they seem gray, prickly, stubbly undergrowth, then, suddenly, where the light touches them, they seem as though afire. "They burned with fire, and were not consumed." And the young man sees this sight. He looks! He has seen it hundreds of times before, but somehow he is in a certain mood this morning, and he sees the glow and stands entranced. Amidst the silence it seems as though he heard voices. It seems as though the whispering leaves of the morning had a tongue, it seems as though he heard his own name called by the whispering of the breeze, and he listens.

Why was he there? As a young man he was educated in the best knowledge of the day. He lived, probably, in one of the finest cities of the world in that day. He had all we mean by university education. He had all the advantages of a city life. And then, when he graduated from school, like so many youths he had an enthusiasm for service. Fortunately, when we are between our "twenties" and "twenty-fives" we are very prone to have that enthusiasm. It is one of God's gifts. And he had an enthusiasm for service. He would do something for his fellows. And he started the doing. The grandest period of life, probably, is when a young man or maiden gives himself or herself to "doing." He experienced, however, what many experience—to serve is not life-giving, or not equal to saving, to serve does not

necessarily mean to save, for those whom we would serve are often not willing to be saved, those for whom we toil to build very often do not recognize our service. The hardest task of service is that those whom we serve do not appreciate it. And very soon this young man felt this lack of appreciation. Probably he had many companions who were toiling with him. Probably they became very radical in their views, as we all do when we serve; we see the wrong, we want to right it, we want to right it in a day, and we take any violent measures to do the righting, and our violent measures are not appreciated. By and by this youth and his companions were involved in trouble, by and by they were surrounded by dangers, and by and by the very slaves whom they were serving jeered at them and hated them.

And then what happens? The youth lost heart. Fearing, for the time being, for his life, he left the city. "Let the mob do what it likes. Let them die, if they want to die, they are not worth anything else. Let the whole crowd go to the lower region, if they like, it is the only region for which they are fit." And he went out into the country, hard, bad-tempered, cynical.

But there is something in the country that cures cynicism. It is a slow process, it does not come all at once, but slowly there is something in God's country that counteracts the effect of God's cities. And this young man by and by began to feel a little less bitter. He didn't get to the point of wanting to serve again, but at any rate he got past the point of calling names, and he settled down to his country's work. He cared for the

sheep, he cared for the cattle, and as he was caring, in the quiet moments he learned to appreciate the beauties around him, much as I am certain he hated the sand at first, and hated the prickly undergrowth. Many a time he cursed the solitude, and then by and by, perhaps on some moonlight night, he began to see beauty, by and by he began to feel the silence, and then he began to come to a second—as it were—a second development. And as I read to you and have spoken to you, one day he saw God as he had never seen Him before. And the voice said, “Go back, go back! Go back to that unthankful city, go back to that despised service, go back and take your part.” I can fancy that there was a great deal of unwillingness. Perhaps the city seemed attractive at times, but oh! it seemed hateful also. To leave that peace and go into turmoil, to leave that gracious quiet and go back into the rude ways of the mob! His heart said, “I hate that crowd.” No doubt Moses said, “I hate the crowd, I won’t go back.” But by and by the quiet prevailed, and Moses went back.

I mention that because I think it is an experience that most of us pass through. We begin to work, we give of ourselves. Then we grow weary and we are apt then to give up. Young men and women, who are here, I know I am going to say something that seems like a foolish dream. When you are thinking of your life’s tasks, go alone, go away in the silence. For it is only as you realize your difficulties and realize in quiet the Power that is waiting to help you, it is only thus that you will do your life’s work. You will be called upon

many times to do a great work, you will be called upon many a time to be disheartened, then it is only what you have in yourself that counts. Finally, it is the strength that you have when you are alone that will tell, it is individuality that counts. We have had our graduations, the classes are all through their exercises. The youth or the maiden who has graduated worthily has done the work in loneliness; there have been hundreds of hours of loneliness. Unless those hours have been there, the student may have just got through, but not have done what ought to have been done, and not gained the life that should have been attained. It is only alone that we fight our fight and find our strength. Young men and women, learn to be alone. For God's sake, do not so live that you are afraid of being by yourself. There is real tragedy in life for a man or woman who dares not be alone. When you have come to the place when you cannot be quiet, God help you! Unless you learn to be quiet, to sit still, or to be in the country without any one at hand, to be with God—quiet—unless you learn that, you do not learn the meaning of life.

I know you might say, "Well, it is all right, but what does one do? What can one do?" Unless you know what to do, nothing will be done, unless you are saved, you will never save any one else, unless you are strong, you will never make another strong. Finally, it is what you are yourself. And nothing will ever be a substitute for the loneliness with God!

Now let me turn to the second chapter. This time, Moses is a middle-aged man. Let us try to see him

again. We saw him last at sunrise. Now I think we had better try to see him at sunset. This time he is on a mountain. Those rocky, bare, stony mountains of the desert. He is away on the heights. Probably not a bit of green near him. Around him nothing but bare tracts. The sun is just falling behind the other hills. You remember the description that I read of it. I will read it again. There is some real poetry in it. The mountains behind, said the description, became sapphire, the distant clouds became gold, orange, the hills between purple, and on either side the shadows and lights played. It was a magical scene, impossible to be seen or realized except in bare mountains, when the bare stones respond to the changing light of sunset.

And this middle-aged man sits there. He is weary. He has taken up his task. He has led many of the oppressed ones out of the city towards the new home, out of a country where they were oppressed to a country that is going to flow with milk and honey. He has led them out—all the way, and he has found it a terribly hard task, a terribly unthankful task. It is not easy to take, say, a few thousand men and women out of the slums of the city and lead them through the country. They know nothing about the country, they do not know what to do in it. You take a man from the slums and put him in the country and what will be the result? Moses had a few thousands of that kind to deal with. They had had no ideals, and he desired to give them ideals. Whenever they got into difficulty they lost heart and he had to try to give them courage. When-

ever they saw a hard, dark time, again, ahead, they said, "Well, we wish we had never come. We did know where we were going to get the next meal when we were slaves, but we don't know now. Why did you bring us?" And I can imagine many a time the man was terribly angry and dreadfully disheartened. And when those days came, he had learned as a young man—and here comes in the lesson, the value of the lesson—he had learned as a young man the meaning of solitude, the meaning of communion alone. And when the days were darkest he went all by himself away up into the mountains. I know when you read the Old Testament account you seem to be reading a miracle. It is nothing of the kind. It is just an ordinary experience described in Hebrew language. He climbed on the mountain, and left the crowd, when he was worn out. He sat there and watched the sunrise and the sunset. He reclined there in the silence, and God spoke again. Whenever we are silent, God can speak, and it needs silence sometimes to hear the still, small voice. And this middle-aged man listened there, and we are told in the story he stayed forty days. Never mind the time. He stayed there until he was remade. And then he went back to his task.

This time I want to speak to the middle-aged men here. Many a time life is utterly disheartening, many a time things seem destined to go wrong, many a time it seems as though we could not be sure of a living, many a time it seems as though finally we shall have to write failure. The city streets are hot, city men are competitors, everything seems to go the wrong way. Men, I

know what it means. But I also know, although perhaps it may seem foolish—I also know that if I will go alone, God will speak. He is never far away, He is always a loved friend, and directly we be still, He will speak. I do not say that He will work a miracle, I do not say He will make our business prosperous, I do not say He will make everything serene, but I do say that He will speak, and as we listen, we shall grow strong, and go back to try to do our duty. Moses on the mount fought with difficulties, and went back to do his duty.

Now comes the third picture. Moses is an old man, worn out. Again, with tottering feet and with probably very slow step, he climbed the hills. Evidently, the longer he lived, the more he knew that silence is a blessing. And so when he grew old and the journey was nearly over, again he went alone. Again it is sunset. And as he looks westward he sees the River Jordan, and sees its green land adjoining. He sees the far limestone cliffs and hills, and then, again, in the distance, he almost thinks he can see the ocean. That is the land to which he has been guiding. That represents to him his whole life's work. He started out to find this country, he has found it, but—it has cost so much that it has killed him, he has no more strength left, the last few miles are too much for him. He cannot superintend the invasion of a new land. He knows what it means, he knows the difficulties, and he cannot do it. And he says to himself, "I am done, I have given all I have, I am done." And

he looks to the setting sun and the golden glow surrounds him as he passes hence.

It seems almost a tragic end. That for which he has fought is not for him, that for which he has lived is not for him. All his ideals are not to be realized. He passes out at sunset and there is no to-morrow of accomplishment for him.

But, after all, it is not tragical. It is not so bad, after all. He has done a great thing. He has laid the foundation of a new nation, and out of that new nation life for the world is to come, and Jesus, the ideal teacher. He does not know it, but so it is.

The hero has fought and dies as he thinks vanquished. But not so. No work that is well done is lost. We may die, O yes, that is quite possible. All heroes die, all heroes do kill themselves eventually. That is a necessity. And when they have killed themselves, their work seems incomplete. Not so. The old man is dying with the glow of sunset on his brow, yet it means he is dying with a splendid record behind. He has failed, but has succeeded. He has never crossed the Jordan, but he has helped millions of men and women to cross the spiritual Jordan of life.

When our end comes, may we, like him, spend the time alone; at last with God, may we lie down and sleep—with God close at hand. May human voices, after they have done their part, die down, and may the voice of God take their place. As we have been in youth with God, as in middle-age we meet our difficulties with Him, so at

death may we pass out in loneliness with God. There is a Holy of Holies in every life; without it life is not worth living. May you know your Holy of Holies; may you oft abide in the sacred place.

May God speak to you constantly. Unless He does, in silence, you will never be the men and women you would like to be.

May you know the blessings of Divine loneliness.

Let us pray.

Help us, Father, so that each day we may acquire some new grace and defeat some old sin. Each day, help us to become more kindly in judgment, more careful in speech, and more helpful in deed. Each day, may the failings with which we were born be lessened, and each day, may the qualities that we love and desire to become ours increase, and so eventually may we be the ideal character of which we dream and which we should love to be.

May many here become saints in God's great household. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven: Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

May the graciousness of Jesus, the love of the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us now and always. Amen.

PERSONAL CONSECRATION TO SERVICE

I am sure that the friends will excuse me and feel sorry for me in the subject that is allotted to me. I take it that it is the hardest subject that could be allotted to any one. It almost seems presumptuous. How can anyone presume to tell another one how to consecrate himself or herself to service? Will you therefore excuse that seeming presumption as I try to do what the committee asked me to do—speak on “Personal Consecration to Service.”

It happened to be my lot, my fortune or misfortune, to try to plant out about three thousand pear trees on my ranch in Texas. We worked very hard for about three months, plowing, harrowing, leveling, and then carefully arranging a series of ditches all over the land and then arranging a wide ditch that should bring in the water. We had to have skilled people, surveyors and others, who knew just how to lay out the land so that the water could be carried all over the soil. When all was done we depended absolutely on the coming of the water. It did not rain; the water was brought down through ditches, and that water came—we were in Texas—that water came from a reservoir away up in New Mexico, two hundred and some miles away. And that water in turn was gathered up on the hills in little rivulets in Colorado,

nearly a thousand miles away. We, down on the plains, depended absolutely on those rivulets up in the mountains of Colorado. If those rivulets failed to catch the droppings from the heavens all our work would be absolutely useless and thrown away.

Now it seems to me, friends, that in the work we are doing we have a somewhat similar instance. You and I have been for some time preparing the land. We have been arranging our work on these lands around the harbor of Boston. When we have done our work to the very best of our ability, then we are obliged to wait for something, and that something, I take it, is a spiritual force that must come from every individual. The gathering cloud up on the hills to me is the individual church member. And whatever we may do in machinery, unless we gain the force of the individual members, all will be useless.

It is always so, of course. The engine has a small chamber where the explosion takes place. The army has a small headquarters. The city has a collective office for management. The Campaign has a center of force, and that is the individual life of every Unitarian. I am never afraid of the machinery. If there is one thing that I have found out that my newly-adopted country can do, it is to arrange machinery. I am not afraid of machinery. We can do that to perfection. I am not afraid of money; whenever you have a good cause you can always get money without any difficulty. The machinery and the money are not hard things to obtain, but individual consecration is a different matter. And I am afraid of

that. Honestly, friends, I am afraid of it. I have never been so afraid of anything in my life as I am of the few words I am saying now, and I enter on this winter's work with a great deal of nervous anxiety. If I were going to ask for money I should not mind; if I were going to ask for machinery I should not mind, but I am asking for personal giving of one's self to God, and that is a very hard thing to do. It is a solemn, serious, individual matter that the prophet or the preacher trembles before.

You remember Isaiah when he was called said, "I cannot do it, I cannot do it." And every individual trembles before the individual duty that awaits one.

How can we gain this power, this personal consecration? How can we be helped to give ourselves as we never have before to God, and how can we so toil that we may bring other men and women to God?

Near my home in Texas there was a mountain about eight thousand feet high. It was absolutely bare, no verdure, because it was in the desert. It was simply in places sheer rock. I looked at that mountain every day for several years and I longed to climb it. Whenever I see a mountain I want to get on the top of it, and I wanted to get on the top of that mountain, but I dared not. It was dangerous and difficult. I waited three years, and then by chance I met a man who said, "I know that mountain; I lived on it practically for years. I know every cañon and gully in it." And I made inquiries and I found it was so. I said, "Will you go with me to the top?" "Yes." And we started out for the

top. Once or twice we were in difficulty, but his experience took us out of the difficulty and he led me safely to that summit to a wonderful view.

You and I are going to say in this Campaign, "Friends, let us climb the hills of God," and the friends whom we ask are perfectly justified in turning around and saying, "Do you know those hills yourself? Can you guide me there? If you want to take me to the higher life, have you been there? Do you know all about it?" When men and women turn and ask me that I don't know what to say. Friends, when you say to those men and women within twenty-five miles of here, "Come with us to God," can you say, "I know, I have been with God; come with me; I know the country; I know the hills of Zion; I have heard the songs of the Holy City and I have seen the holy places. Come with me; it is worth while." Can you say that? If you cannot say it you cannot make a campaign for membership.

Now, friends, it is a terribly serious business and I want you to put it right on your hearts. You have no right to ask men to climb the hills unless you can guide them. Can you guide them? I wonder a great many times how to get this greater efficiency, and I know only two ways. You may know many more; I know only two that help me. One that helps me more than any other is quietude, solitude, silence. You know that all the great leaders of men have felt this. Jesus often went into the desert and when he fought his biggest fight he fought it in the desert. Moses lived years in the desert and in silence. John Wesley spent years in the West Indies, out

of his work and in silence. Paul, if I read rightly, went three years into the desert when he changed his theology and tried to find new grounds. Somehow, somehow, we must be alone with God before we can talk of God. And it is terribly difficult to get alone nowadays. I spent the usual amount of my life in college, preparing for the ministry. I spent fifteen years in the ministry in England, then I went to the desert for seven years, and when I look back I thank God more for those seven years than for all the fifteen that went before it. I don't wish for a moment to cast any imputations on what I learned in college, but I learned more on the desert than ever I learned in college. I remember one morning especially—and excuse me for being personal, my subject is personal—I remember one morning climbing one of the hills. I started out perhaps at three or four o'clock. I was supposed to be camping out; I could not sleep, so I got up and climbed this hill, up through the brushwood and the undergrowth. Then suddenly I came out of the brushwood on to the summit, right in a moment, and before me there stretched a view such as I had never seen before. I cannot explain, I could not think of describing it. Then there came over me somehow a feeling that I don't know how to explain. I trembled, every part of me. I seemed to hear in the silence a voice I had never heard before. I knelt down there and in that wonderful silence I was nearer God than ever before in my life. No college experience could have given me that.

Friends, if you are going to talk about the Kingdom this winter, in silence, in quietude, speak with God your-

self, and I think that will be one way of helpfulness.

And will you let me mention another way? I do it tremblingly. I came, as you know, out of the so-called Orthodox faith, and in that so-called Orthodox faith we had one type of meeting that we do not have in our communion. Every morning in the vestry, twenty minutes before I went into the service, four or five men came. We all went on our knees and those four or five men prayed. Two or three of them were seers and they helped me wonderfully. How would it be this winter—I mention it very haltingly, but how would it be this winter, now that we are going to be speaking about spiritual things—how would it be if at times we get together and pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit? I don't know how you would take it, but I yearn for something like that—for some man who has lived with God to come and by my side talk with me about my Father. I think we ministers should be happier if you laymen would at times join with us in prayer like this.

I mentioned this yesterday at a Campaign meeting and I said quite casually, "Have you any men in this church who will do it?" and the women looked round at one another in astonishment. They could not think of the idea. Friends, we have dropped that idea too much. We have let the thought of prayer go too much. If we wish to speak of God we must know Him, and we cannot know Him without talking with Him by the way,—communion, as we call it, or prayer, if you like.

Let me conclude by another little bit of experience that I lived through. It was very hot down on the plains in

Texas and about eighty or a hundred miles away there was a range of hills that rose up twelve thousand feet. When we got worn down completely we would go on to those higher hills and it was quite an experience. We left the absolute desert where it rained perhaps once a year. As we began to go along we began to get into the shrubs and when we had wound through one or two cañons we got into a well-wooded district and we heard the lushing of waters. And I remember my wife and I—it was the first time we had seen any water for three years that was clean—it was all muddy water that came down from Colorado—my wife and I looked at it and said, “Look, there is clean water!” As you climb these hills you finally get into a verdure as beautiful as anything you see in Massachusetts. I said, “How is it that this land is so beautiful and everything else is desert?” I asked a good many and this is the explanation that was finally given me. They said, “These highest hills catch moisture that is driven in the upper air away from the Gulf of Mexico. They catch it and collect it and every day practically the year through there is a shower up there.” I know we went and every day we had a thunder storm in the morning. Somehow the clouds brought the upper moisture collected on those great heights and then it poured down below and made that beautiful bit of greenery.

Friends, every Christian man and woman lives up on the heights and collects, as it were, the rich secrets of God and then sends them down below to the friends on the plains. You and I have to live this winter on the

heights. We have to collect the spiritual gifts of our Father and then we have to show them to our friends below and say to them, "Friends, come on back with us away to the heights; there we will show you the beauties of holiness."

This winter, you and I, experiencing different beatitudes, have to speak of them to all whom we meet. God help us so to do.

MESSAGES FROM THE CHURCH
CALENDAR

OUR LIFE AHEAD

With the coming of October, we gather again, and unite in Christian worship and service.

The Christian life has two phases—inner and outer, as Jesus put it, there is personal love for God, and love for our neighbor. For a full life we must seek God with our whole heart and soul, and serve man as we would ourselves.

In the busy life of our cities we are apt to forget the former phase. We naturally seek to be “doing,” and unconsciously overlook the importance of “being.”

Let us this winter cultivate our inner selves. The more efficient the lamp within the lighthouse, the further its gleams will shine, and similarly the purer and nobler our life within, the larger will be our sphere of service.

Give some time each day to quiet thought with God, and let us make each Sabbath morning's worship a real season of intimacy with our Father. Prepare yourself for the worship. Think of God as you arise, let your thoughts be Godward as you approach His House. Try a few moments of private worship ere the collective worship commence. With such preparation in spirit, the Sanctuary will be filled with the glory of God.

In touch with the Almighty, may we all acquire new graces and powers!

If we so do, there need be no anxiety about our outer service. As the flower cannot but shed abroad its fragrance, so the life in touch with God cannot but speak for its Master. If it be well within, it cannot but be well with all our church's activities.

TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

One of our young men recently said that if any one asked him why he was a Unitarian, he should find it hard to say.

Whilst fortunately and desirably denominational barriers are breaking, yet as long as denominations remain we should be able to say why we prefer the one of our choice to others. For the sake, therefore, of our younger worshippers, I will say why I am a Unitarian minister, in the hope that my statement may suggest a reason for their being here to worship and work.

“I believe in God, Father of All, and that He is ever leading and helping.

I believe one way in which He helps, is in the sending of men and women into the world to lead others, and that we are all sent with that purpose.

I believe that the greatest leader hitherto is Jesus, and that his teaching and example show more plainly than any other the way God would have us live.

I believe that it is my duty to try in all the ways I can to live the life that he set forth.”

Of course there are other things that I believe respecting the various aspects of life, but the above is the foundation of my life.

With such foundation the Unitarian Church is willing that I should be a minister within its order, but I do not know any other denomination that would be satisfied with that simple creed, hence I am a Unitarian minister.

For the sake of comparison with the above, I advise that The Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds be read, then

the greater demands of those creeds will at once be felt.

I cannot honestly say all that is in those two historic creeds, but I can say honestly what I have written above.

Allowing liberty in interpretation of all creeds the Unitarian Church seeks the fellowship of all who love God and serve man.

VISIONS

I once lived for three years near Sheffield, and had each morning to walk about a mile through the city from the station to the college. As you know, Sheffield is a smoky city and rarely could one see far through the smoky pall.

After I had been there for two and a half years, while crossing a small square, I saw down a diverging street a beautiful green hill. I stopped and gazed in amazement, wondering where that hill had come from. It had, of course, always been there, but I had never seen it because the heavy atmosphere had intervened.

The environs of Sheffield are beautiful, but the dwellers in the city get few views of those delectable regions.

I wonder if there be not here a parable of life. We are compelled to busy ourselves in our daily tasks. The calls, claims, and anxieties of life are ever around, and often we cannot peer through the haze, and so we are apt to see little of other phases of life. Then, perchance, for some reason, the mists separate and we see afar and upwards.

The one day, at least for me, when the mists roll away, and I see the realms of the Spirit, is Sunday. I forget the material and see the immaterial. I forget earth's discordant notes and hear the angels sing. The time of the day which helps me most is the hour of Worship; it is the hour of the week when I see the gardens of God surrounding the homes of men. The streets between those homes are clean and pure, nothing that defileth or worketh a lie being found therein, and instead of earth's babel sounds divine music delights mine ear.

During this month, may the hill on which our church home stands, prove to be to us all the Mount of Vision, and, strengthened and inspired by our blessings, may our month be one of noble life.

Also, we pray that our visitors, whom we welcome, may get glimpses of the treasures of God, and hear His wonderful words of life.

A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

We are all entering on another stretch of life's road. With the end of 1922 we passed another milestone, and now an unknown mile lies ahead.

What will happen none know. Sometimes the road will be pleasant and easy, sometimes rocky and difficult. At times we shall have glorious vistas, at times we shall be encircled with fogs. Some days we shall have good companions, and some days it will be lonely and disheartening. Now and then, maybe, comrades will pass out of sight, and perchance we may not reach the next milestone.

Our journeying, whether we recognize it or not, is after all, a travelling towards the City of God. Some day, either on this reach of road, or on one further ahead, we shall arrive at the gates of that City, and it is for us to see that we travel wisely and helpfully.

How can we gain help as we go along? Friendly talks with persons and books will help, service will inspire, now and then quiet thought and stillness will hearten, but the greatest help will be in joining in worship and praise with our fellow-travellers.

The old countries did not unwisely in placing along the road wayside shrines. We have our shrines; let us turn to them and lift our minds to God, and the inspiration thus gained will assist in the distances ahead. A little chapel near Burnsall, in North Yorkshire, is to me a sacred spot. Father and I were on a walking tour and as we neared this little sanctuary, we heard the sound of singing. We turned in, and the help I gained is still with me.

It may be that the help we gain in our Sanctuary will abide with us and brighten all our days ahead. Rest

and worship frequently on your journey, and whether your experiences be joyous or painful you may use them so that through them you become stronger and kindlier men and women.

I pray that in our Sanctuary wearied men and women may gain new strength, and earth's discordant sounds be lost in the songs of the Angels.

WHY THE CHURCH EXISTS

Each society, association, or corporation has a reason for its formation. A corporation is formed for the purpose of supplying a certain need and reaping therefrom a sum of money; a political club is formed to spread abroad certain ideas of government; a communistic association to teach certain principles of social life; a Masonic lodge to increase the number of Masons; a social club to cater to the pleasures of its members. With all societies a certain object is to be served. Similarly the Church has a basic reason, definite and distinct, for its existence.

Man recognizes that behind and in all life there is a mighty power, wondrous as the starry distances, and alluring as the noblest virtues. That Power he calls God. Man's life at its best is a constant search after his God.

The Churches exist to help in that search. That is the supreme reason for their being. No other society has the same aim, and no other association so great a purpose. All other work some one or other society can do better than the Church, but in this task the Church stands alone. It must be master in this field.

Let us more and more give ourselves to our work, see that we fulfill our destiny, and help men and women to walk with God. If we fail, I see no other company to take up our task, and I see no hope for the present storm-tossed world.

The Church has the greatest ideal in the world, let us give ourselves more and more to its realization.

THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH

A celebrated European general once said that in every battle there came a point where both armies were just about defeated, and that all then depended on stamina. The side which could hold on most grimly was the side that won the victory.

Similarly in life there come days or occasions when only by grimly holding on can existence either be endurable or helpful. There come days when fate seems to group together its worst powers and send them collectively upon us. Work is hard to obtain, the future seems uncertain, home troubles arise, and health yields under the stress. All then depends on something within; if deep down within ourselves there is a steady unwavering faith, or hope, or trustfulness, then the storm may be weathered; on the contrary if heart be lost, all is gone.

Within us all there is what we call our real self, or soul, and as long as that is staunch all is well; with an unconquerable soul we are never defeated.

So it is that the real task for us all is to find this inner strong self. All that can help to this end must be sought. Lives of other men, examples of heroes and heroines, friendships and heart to heart intercourse all aid, and perhaps more than aught beside the Church should be an ally and an inspiration.

I often wonder if our Church thus helps; if it does, we have great cause to be thankful; if not, we should seriously seek the reason.

Let us see to it that we all furnish our quota of helpfulness. Our soloists may sing some word that finds a lodgment in the heart and ever whispers of hope; a cheery greeting may give new power, and a pervading atmosphere of worship may be the instrument of won-

drous solace and balm. (We need to remember that our absence may chill, and our presence assist this atmosphere.)

The writer of an old hymn said: "Such things were too painful for me until I went into God's house." That experience may be re-lived any day. It may be that men and women walk towards our Church with heavy hearts and doubting minds; life is too painful for them, and it may be that they return home with new joy and confidence.

That there may be such transformation is my greatest desire, and I know that it is the desire of our worshippers.

May our aspirations become realizations!

LIGHT AFTER DARKNESS

With the coming of April there arrives a new spirit on earth. The world has been winter bound, and for many weeks has endured the storm and stress.

It has been a season of quiet, grim, passive resistance, but one morning we awake to a new feeling in the air, and a whisper of new life is heard in our lives and homes. Plants and animals seem to feel the same mysterious thrill, a tiny creature scurries across the path, a blade of grass shows out beautifully green, and the sparrows' twittering is the first sound of the morning. Henceforward each day will reveal some fresh growth, and in a few weeks the whole landscape will tell of throbbing life. The Lord of life is no longer in the tomb, but is arisen.

We no longer want to sing that grim old hymn:

“O God our Help in Ages past,”

but we find ourselves humming:

“Let us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord for He is kind.”

We have crossed the threshold into a new life. As with the seasons, so is it with the whole of our story—a period of stress, a time of shadow, a season of determined endurance, and then days of plenty and beauty. There are the hard days of ploughing and planting, and then the days of ingathering. We work out the plot of life, which is often confused and tangled, but the last chapter untangles the skein, and reveals the purpose of it all.

Shall crime bring crime forever,
Strength aiding still the strong?
Is it Thy will, O Father,
That man should toil for wrong?
No! say Thy mountains, No! Thy skies;
Man's clouded sun shall brightly rise,
And songs ascend instead of sighs.

Slowly and sometimes in pain the story of life is written. Some days we write in pain and anguish, and some days with thrilling pleasure. The various chapters have different refrains, but the closing words tell of a new heaven and a new earth. Each experience sounds its note, and in the end all will form a grand Hallelujah!

A MESSAGE FROM REV. JOHN ELIOT,
OUR FORMER PASTOR

The following are extracts from a sermon preached by the Apostle Eliot. The original is in possession of the Historical Society, and has been translated by a friend. Translation is the right word to use as Mr. Eliot used a shorthand of his own which now is very hard to decipher. It is very interesting after a lapse of about 300 years to read words of the former great leader of this Church.

“Do not let us be filled with fears & troubles, and perplex our spirits, for is not God our Father? Those that drown themselves in worldly cares are like fatherless children, whereas we are the sons of God. Let us not be solicitously careful for the want of anything, nor be anxious & perplexed in regard of any person, nor yet be diffidently distrustful, rather let us make known our supplications & requests to the Lord with Thanksgiving.”

“You would call him a silly child that should vex & disquiet himself how he should be clad, and how he should live when he had a kind father to take care of him: so unwise & foolish are we when we moyle & trouble ourselves about this life, what we shall eat & drink, and how subsist.”

“Here I might take up a little complaint against ourselves. Where is the man in whose heart the Spirit of God dwells, reigns, & rules? who preserves the clear light & glorious manifestations of the grace & love & glory of God which the spirit sometimes lets into our minds & consciousness? who maintains and cherishes those sweet & precious affections towards God and

Christ's love to him, and delights in longsuffering & hungering & thirsting after him?"

"Dream not of golden days, look not to be free from sorrow and trouble, for we need emptying from vessel to vessel otherwise we should settle upon our cots."

CHURCH UNITY

There is much talk of Church Unity, and it is well that it is so. Men and women are more and more feeling the folly of doctrinal divisions, and so plans for organization are being put forth. But, up to the present, no plan has been published that has appealed very strongly to me, for each and every one that I have seen, have made too many demands—none have the simplicity that I crave. All make too many demands.

If we ask the astronomer about his field, he will say, "I know very little; my instruments but introduce me to distances that appall—I do not know."

If we turn to the geologist, he concludes his answer by telling how little he knows.

All scholars alike, after telling of some of the things which they have learned, confess their ignorance. Of the vast creation's language, we know but the alphabet. Every field of knowledge is bounded on all sides by limitless stretches concerning which we all can only say, "I do not know."

If this be so with Creation, much more must it be so with the Creator.

Still, strange to say, we are apt to claim to know the ways of *The Lord of All*, but if scholars dare not be dogmatic concerning any one field of life, much less should we dogmatize as regards *The Lord of Life*.

All we can ask is that we walk reverently before the *Eternal Light*, seek ever for more light, and adore the glory that gladdens our eyes.

The great basis of union is a reverent, worshipful spirit. I will worship with any who are seeking *God*, but I will be silent when they recite their creeds.

Granted this reverential worship, there will follow service of man.

Search and service are the fundamentals of life.

When we of the churches are humble enough to get down to these two simple demands, then real unity will be possible.

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